HOMILETIC MONTHLY

JANUARY.

Sunday within the Oct. of Christmas.
The Circumcision of our Lord.
The Epiphany (or Dom. I p. Epiph.).
Second Sunday after Epiph. (Feast of the Holy Name.)
Septuagesima Sunday.
Sexagesima Sunday.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Epist. Gal. IV, 1-7.
Gosp. Luke II, 33-40.

Subject.—*The work of the Christian.*

Text.—*Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Why was Christ born? To redeem and save us. In what sense, then, can He be said to be "set for the fall of many"? Ah! This Child came not alone to open the gate of Heaven, but to show us how to enter! He redeemed us without our help: He will not save us without our co-operation.

Transition.—Can He who is "the Resurrection and the Life" prove also the *fall* and *death* of Christians? Even so; for to many His doctrine is a stumbling-block. Christ has *finished the work He was sent to do* (John xvii, 4): *we* have *our* work to do!

First Point.—*The Fall of the Christian* may happen not only by denying Christ but by not fulfilling His command-

ments. "Not every one that saith to Me *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven." (*Develop* the *necessity of fear*, from (*a*) the falls recorded in Christian history, (*b*) and even in our own circles, (*c*) our own lives!)

Second Point.—*The Resurrection of the Christian*, (*a*) by Baptism, (*b*) by Penance. Christ's work was to make these sacraments *powerful unto life;* our work is to *find life* by the *first*, to recover it by the *second*, to strengthen it by *Communion*, etc., and by *earnest* and *constant* co-operation with *grace.*

Conclusion.—Like our Blessed Lady, let us *keep these things in our hearts*, that Christ may not have been born *for us* in vain.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

Epist. Titus II 11–15.
Gosp. Luke II, 21.

Subject.—*Beginning a Christian Life.*

Text.—*We should live soberly and justly and godly in this world.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—Christ began to fulfil Jewish law by being circumcised. This first, like the last act of His life, was one of self-sacrifice—even to the shedding of blood!

Transition.—Christ, not under the Jewish law, obeyed it 'to fulfil all justice." We are under the Christian law. Following Christ's example, shall we not obey it, even though this cost us some self-sacrifice? "You have not yet resisted unto *blood*," says the Apostle. Christ undergoes circumcision of the flesh, obeying *unto blood;* we must undergo circum-

cision of the *heart;* that is, some self-denial. We shall consider the

I. Duties of the Christian life.
II. Resolution to fulfil them.

First Point.—These duties are

a. Negative: abstaining from evil and from the *occasions of sin.* How little does the experience of others, nay, even of ourselves, teach us! We resolve never to commit sin, and nevertheless place ourselves in those very circumstances which have been the frequent occasion of sin to us! "The burnt child dreads the fire;" the child is reasonable! But the man? Ah! he is strong in everything but will-power. Strong in his passions, in temper, in unjust dealing, in uncharitable suspicions, judgments, conversations, in impure desires, in gluttonous excess of food or drink, in self esteem, in despising others, etc. Innumerable sins have shown him how strong he was in these things, and *how weak his will must be!* How very unreasonable to expose that broken reed to the tempest of passion! "He that loveth the danger shall perish therein!" But this means some little self-sacrifice. Have we yet resisted *unto blood?*

b. Positive: not merely doing virtuous acts, but striving to cultivate the virtues themselves. The *positive* laws of God and of the Church prescribe certain *acts;* we shall the more easily and agreeably perform these acts by the earnest and devout cultivation of the virtues which are their *principles.* While repeated acts do indeed lead to the *habit* or *virtue*, we should draw consolation from the thought that in performing a given duty *joyfully* we are cultivating a *virtue* at the same time, which will make easier the various subsequent acts of that virtue which the law obliges us to.

Second Point.—Our resolution of amendment must be

a. Specific, rather than general. Experience, that hardest of teachers, must have shown us the futility of *general* resolutions. The mind grows perplexed with the many details which such resolutions cover, and when some of these details are slighted, we give up the whole resolution in despair. We should rather find what has been the *source* of our greatest sins (our predominant passion may here be referred to in elaborate detail) and make our resolution apply to it. We shall then be like a prudent general who skilfully detects and guards the weak parts of his fortress.

b. Earnest. The business of salvation is our highest concern. As it is a *spiritual* business, we must not estimate it by a worldly standard, but by the light of God's revelation. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer any damage to his soul? A hesitating, half-hearted resolution is defeated the moment it is made, is strangled at its very birth.

c. Humble. We are as reeds shaken by the wind. "Without Me," saith Christ, "you cannot do anything." But, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me," as the Apostle puts it.

d. Prayerful. Pray for God's helping grace, and the intercession of our Lady and all the Saints and Angels.

e. Joyful. "God loves a cheerful giver;" neither is He outdone in generosity. We serve, not a tyrant, but a Father. "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father)."

Conclusion.—It is the custom to sneer at the "Resolutions" naturally made at the beginning of a New Year. The

sneer receives much of its urgency from its truthfulness; for, in fact, these resolutions rarely avail, because of the lack of the foregoing characteristics. But, if we resolve in "a good and a very good heart," and review our resolutions every Sunday—let us say, at Holy Mass—we shall have a strong spur to good, and a strong shield against evil. Place your resolutions under Mary's loving and powerful intercession! (End with the *prayer* of the Mass.)

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD.

(Or Dom. I p. Epiph.)

Epist. Isa. LX, 1-6.
Gosp. Matt. II, 1-12.

Subject.—*Christian fear.*

Text.—"*Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness.*" (Matt. viii, 11, 12.)

Introduction.—Epiphany means *manifestation.* The Church recalls to-day a threefold manifestation of Christ: viz., to the Gentile Kings at Bethlehem, to the Jews at the Jordan, and at the Marriage at Cana. The light shone, and the darkness did not comprehend it! The Jews shut their eyes: but "the Gentiles have seen a great light."

Transition.—This is the feast of the Gentile peoples, *our peculiar* feast day! The Jews, once the chosen people, have given place to the Gentiles, among whom the "name of the Lord is great," as the prophet Malachy had foretold. Yet have we nothing to fear, lest the light which is in us be turned into darkness? Catholics as we are, we have not, nevertheless, an assured possession of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Children of the kingdom, have not we reason to fear that "many shall come from the East," etc. (repeat the text). Consider

I. The light of faith :

II. Our duty toward it.

First Point.—How did the world profit by the "manifestations" of Christ? What fruit resulted at

a. Bethlehem? In the *blood of the Apostles* must the seed be nourished in Pagan lands!

b. the Jordan? Only a few disciples recognized and followed the Christ.

c. Cana? Christ's preaching and miracles met afterwards with constant opposition.

(Develop these three considerations.) Of what a slow growth is the seed of faith, and how carefully it should be guarded from adverse influence! Consider how little profit many Christians receive from the manifestations of Christ to the soul in

a. spiritual lights, like the star of the Wise Men, leading unerringly to the Saviour.

b. Baptism, like that of St. John, in water, indeed, but also "in the Holy Ghost," as Christ said.

c. Communion, for which not water has been changed into wine, but wine into Christ's blood, that our souls might enjoy the fulness of richness and strength and sweetness.

(Develop, showing how all these manifestations should bring to the heart a fuller knowledge of the Christ; and how little, after all, many Christians know of Him and His spirit.) "Have I been so long with you, and do you not know Me?" was the complaint of our Saviour to St. Philip the Apostle!

Second Point.—We must not allow this light which is in us to become darkness. We should

a. thank God unceasingly for the knowledge He has given us of His Son, which is "eternal life." We should

b. beg for a more intimate knowledge and fellowship with Christ:

c. feed the flame with pious reading and with meditation of the gospel narrative:

d. guard it unceasingly from the darkness of error and sin; for both of these corrupt intellect and heart.

Conclusion.—Christians, we have found the Christ, not by the wonderful light of a star shining in the darkness, but by the more wondrous light of revelation, flooding the world with noontide splendors. Have we offered Him gifts of *gold* (by charity to His poor whom He wishes to be received even as Himself; by adorning the second Bethlehem of His altars and temples; and *spiritually* by giving Him the wealth of our heart's love and devotion) and of *frankincense* (by offering Him in the temple of our hearts the incense of good works, praise and prayer?) and of *myrrh* (by "dying daily" for His sake, as the Apostle puts it, in mortification of our wills and senses; and by offering Him cheerfully the agony of our death-hour whensoever and howsoever it shall please Him to call us?)

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

(2d Sunday after Epiphany.)

Epist. Acts IV, 8–12.
Gosp. Luke II, 21.

Subject.—*Reverence for the Holy Name.*

Text.—*For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.* (Epist.)

Introduction.—The Gospel reminds us that the Holy Name, given to the God-child at His circumcision, was the suggestion, not of human love or human fitness, but of divine appointment and divine wisdom. "His name was called

Jesus, *which was called by the angel*, before He was conceived in the womb."

Transition.—This Blessed Name comes to our ears, therefore, with divine significance. It has the excellence, the power, the sweetness of heaven about it; and, even if it had no wondrous history of ineffable love to point to, no prophetic accent of "Saviour of the World" to dignify it, it still should be an object of deepest reverence, because of its divine allotment to the Christ. We shall consider

I. Its characteristics.
II. The duty of reverence towards it.
III. The sinfulness of irreverence.

First Point.—This Name is, *first*, very *excellent*, because it is the name of

a. The Man-God. Conceive, if we can, the excellence of the Godhead! Whatever of glory, of power, of goodness is contained in that conception, belongs to Christ! But who can conceive the perfection of God, which even an eternity can never exhaust even before the unimpeded gaze of the Blessed in heaven? Christ is GOD, and His Name—JESUS!

b. The Saviour. A new light is thrown on the Name! If God were forever encompassed with "the inaccessible light" in so much that no other relation should bind us to Him than that of creation, still would His Name be worthy of all love and reverence. But this Creator has become our Saviour! And this, too, at the expense of infinite humiliation, even to becoming man for us, nay, even to the infamy of the Cross. (Develop, from the evidences of Christ's love for us, given by His life and death, the necessity of a special return of love and of reverence for His Name.) His Name is that of

c. *Brother*, *Friend*, *Host* and *Guest*. (Develop.)

This Name is, *secondly*, a Name of *Power*, in

a. *Heaven*, to rejoice the just.
b. *Earth*, to comfort, gladden and *shield* us (in temptation, etc.)
c. *Hell*, terrible and avenging, but always adorable!

This Name is, *thirdly*, a Name of *Sweetness* to

a. *The sinner*, bidding him not to despair, but to have *hope* and *courage*.
b. *The just*, bidding him ascend to still higher levels, and rewarding him even in this life with the sweetness of divine fellowship.
c. *The sorrowful*, for it is the name of the "Man of Sorrows," who Himself bore all our sorrows, and was afflicted because of *our* sins. The Crucifix is a lesson of patience at once and of the rewards of patience.

Second Point.—From these characteristics it follows that we should always cultivate a sentiment of the deepest reverence and love for this Name, in

a. The devout aspirations of the *heart* and the *lips*.
b. Whatever speech of ours concerns it.
c. In reverent bowing of the head when it is pronounced.
d. In reparation when it is profaned. (Develop these points.)

Third Point.—The sinfulness of irreverence becomes at once apparent. Alas! that Christians, who have received the adoption of *sons*, should treat that ever-blessed Name with less respect than the Jews of old—living under a dispensation of servitude and fear—the Name of God. This was the "unpronounceable Name" of the Old Testament: awful, mysterious, terrible. Daring not to pronounce Jehovah,

the Jews styled Him *Adonai*, *my Lord;* or *El*, the *Strong;* or *Shaddai*, the *Destroyer*, the *Powerful One.* And after this Name has become transformed for us, not into the *Destroyer*, but *Jesus*, *Saviour*, assuming an ineffable sweetness and tenderness for our ears—ah! the pity of it!—this Name is profaned daily and hourly, is employed in jest, in curse, in imprecation! Dearest Jesus, how is it possible that we do so lightly use Thy adorable Name? Ah! Thou hast come too near to us, Thou hast become too lowly indeed for our sake! I can understand how the damned in hell, plunged into endless and terrible torments, should hate and blaspheme that Name in hell which they despised on earth—it has proved to them "a sign to be contradicted," and has been set for their fall! The rejected Saviour is now the avenging Judge. But I cannot understand how redeemed Christians on earth, for whom His name is still prophetic of salvation—*Jesus*, that is, *Saviour*, should find it an instrument of anything but blessings, and an incentive to anything but the deepest depths of reverent love. Again, the scandals and the bad example accompanying the profane use of this Name add to the sinfulness; and so, like the demons in hell, not merely do Christians make it a mockery, but strive, unconsciously perhaps, but not the less effectually, to undo all the Saviour's work which that name symbolizes!

Conclusion.—"In the name of Jesus let every knee bow of those that are in heaven or earth or under the earth, and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii, 10, 11). To cultivate devotion to this Name requires *negatively*, to guard against those things (such as anger, intemperance, quarrelings), which are so often occasions of profanity; and, *positively*, to use habitually some devout invocations, practices etc., in honor of this Name. (Speak of the *indulgences* attached to these aspirations and practices—*vid. Raccolta.*) Finally, pray that all men may learn better and better the meaning of that petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be Thy Name!" Amen.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Epist. I Cor. IX, 24-29; X, 1-5.
Gosp. Matt. XX, 1-16.

Subject.—*The Calls of Grace.*

Text.—*Many are called, but few chosen.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Briefly explain the symbolism of the Gospel. The *hours* may be taken to represent various special calls to the service of God. The "early morning"—creation and the elevation of man to a *supernatural* end; the "third hour"—the call of Abraham; the "sixth hour"—call of Moses; the "ninth hour"—the various warnings of the prophets; the "eleventh" or "evening hour"—the mission of Christ and the call of Christianity to the world.

Transition.—How little these calls have availed! For "the world is seated in iniquity and in the shadow of death." *Sin* hardens the heart and blinds the eye. How many calls have come to *us*, not, indeed, to believe in Christ, but to labor more earnestly in His vineyard; and still how little we do for Him, how seldom we even listen patiently to these calls! *Sin* hardens our hearts and dulls our hearing. We should fear lest we be of the many who, though called, shall not be chosen, for God's eternal rewards. Consider the calls made to

I. The Jews.
II. Christians.

First Point.—Relate the mission of Elias to King Achab and his idolatrous people. Its details are in many respects typical of God's dealings with the Jews; for, first, we behold *sin*, then the *anger* of God, then His merciful *call* to repentance, His *pardon* of those who are converted to Him with

their whole heart, *His punishment* of those who despise the call. The sin was *idolatry*, God's anger was shown in the *famine*, His mercy in the *preaching* of Elias, His pardon in the downpouring of gracious rains on the parched earth, His vengeance in the *destruction* of Jezebel's false prophets and priests.

Throughout Jewish history we observe a similar course of God's providence; calls and warnings uttered with greatest persistence by the prophets, striking and very intelligible blessings and punishments. The Jews were gross-minded, and required such instruction and punishment and reward as children receive. Some of the punishments narrated in the Old Testament seem to be very severe (*e.g.*, that of Oza who touched the ark to keep it safely in position, and was struck dead for his want of reverence—Paral. I, xiii, 9), but the lessons to be inculcated were to be enforced only by such *sensible* means to a carnal people. Thus, too, the plagues, famines, wars, captivities, and the final destruction of Jerusalem, the "City of David."

In all these punishments, nevertheless, we can read new *calls to repentance*, so that even the "anger of God" becomes really a manifestation of His mercy!

Second Point.—"Now all these things happened to them in figure, and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world (*viz.*, the *eleventh* or *last* hour) have come" (I Cor. x, 11). No more do the prophets raise their voices to warn us; no longer are there prophecies of evil things and their dire fulfilment. Shall we conclude that sin no longer offends God? Why then is the providence of God altered to us? (Refer to the fall of the angels. They fell, "never to rise again." God gave them no calls to grace: "I saw Lucifer falling like lighting from heaven," said Christ. But to sinful man He gives hope and grace! Why these different providences? Perhaps for the reason that the angels, being pure spirits, with vision of good and evil unclouded by the clay of our earthly habitation, sinned the greater sin. God then, condescended to the gross mental and

moral state of the ancient world, and sent them *sensible* warnings and *sensible* rewards and punishments. But not to *us* does He act thus. For, in the noonday of the Christian revelation, with all the lessons before our eyes of Christ's miracles and preaching and mercy and exceeding great love, we have become more like unto the angelic hosts in a clear and deep intelligence of spiritual things. If *we* sin, after all these lessons, surely we sin the greater sin! Should we not fear lest, finally, the punishment of the angels should be ours?) We must not, then, expect any gross calls to God's service. But if we use ordinary reason, we shall find gracious calls throughout our whole life. There are the instructions and sermons of God's own ministers in His temples; the warnings and advice of our confessors; the lessons found in meditation and pious reading; the special seasons of grace instituted by the Church as special calls to repentance and a renewed spiritual life; the sacraments, and especially Holy Communion—when not a prophet from God, but His own beloved Son, speaks to our hearts. Let us not, like Elias at Horeb, look for the Lord in "a great and strong wind, overthrowing the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces; the Lord is not in the wind!" Nor in "an earthquake: the Lord is not in the earthquake!" Nor in "a fire: the Lord is not in the fire!" but as in the scarce perceived "whistling of a gentle air" shall the voice of the Lord be heard! (See III Kings xix, 9–14).

Conclusion.—But if we are to hear so gentle a voice, surely our ears must not be filled with the tumults of earth! The calls of business or of pleasure must not be continuous or so urgent as to deny the soul some opportunity to hear "the still, small voice." (Speak of the significance of this season of preparation for Lent.) As the Church already begins to adopt a penitential garb, and omits the song of the "Gloria" in the Mass; so must we be intent on gradually acquiring the spirit of recollection and penitence. Who knows but that for many of us it may be the last call before "the night cometh, in which no man can work!"

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Epist. 2 Cor. XI, 19; XII, 9.
Gosp. Luke VIII, 4-15.

Subject.—*Christian Courage.*

Text.—*My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made strong in infirmity.* (Epist.)

Introduction.—The Epistle is a narrative of great trials, of great graces and heavenly visions, of temptation and victory. Shall we answer: But St. Paul was a wonderfully-chosen man, destined to great trials, temptations, triumphs? Let us not forget that we are at least called to the eternal triumphs of heaven!

Transition.—Our life-history is a narrative of temptation followed not by triumph but by defeat. And as the calls of grace find us despondent, we begin to look for defeat as a frequent issue to the battle of temptation. God knows, we are very weak, and poor and miserable. But we "can do all things in Him that strengtheneth us." Consider

I. God's grace.
II. Man's co-operation.

First Point.—We should sustain a manly courage with the thought that we do not fight alone. God gives grace to all, sufficient for salvation. (The example of good people; the intercession of the saints and angels, patrons and guardian angels, our Lady; the whole economy of the Church; the Sacraments with their strengthening and illumining powers, etc., are helps so endless and so wide-spread, that we may be said to be living in an atmosphere of constant grace.) Be assured that God is not wanting to us in the conflict!

Second Point.—Why then do we not always gain the victory? Not because grace is wanting, but because *we* are wanting in co-operation with it. What does this mean?

a. *Avoiding the occasions of sin*—a necessity plainly indicated by common sense. "Who loveth the danger, shall perish therein."

b. *Prayer*—in temptation, after temptation (thanksgiving), and before temptation (*i.e.*, morning and evening prayers, the Angelus, etc., etc.), all of which may be considered a remote preparation for successful resistance to any sudden temptation.

c. *Cultivation of the virtues* directly opposed to our predominant passion.

d. *Strengthening of will power* by some denial of lawful pleasures.

e. *Humble distrust of self*—"Without Me ye can do nothing."

f. *Confidence in God*—"I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me."

Conclusion.—Thus shall power be made strong in infirmity; thus shall we find

> "That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

NOTES FOR THE PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

MASSILLON.

Never, perhaps, was there a Christian orator who possessed a more perfect knowledge of the heart of man. He insinuates himself into its utmost recesses: he explores and lays open every avenue to public inspection. He delineates the affections, describes the first causes of the corruption, and displays the inward workings of the mind, with such precision and clearness, that every individual who has departed from the ways of virtue beholds as exact a delineation of his own features, as if the picture had been designed for him alone.

Is not an eloquent thing always, more or less, a splendid and sonorous thing?

IN THE arrangement of his discourses Massillon attends more to sentiments than words. He prepares his audience for hearing plain truths by a short exposition of his subject; and, instead of demonstrating the existence of the law, or the necessity of implicitly submitting to its injunctions, of which he supposes that his auditory is already convinced, he immediately proceeds to combat the pretexts which the violators of it allege in justification of their conduct.

THE STYLE of Massillon is animated, chaste, and flowing; and, although dignified and worthy of the Christian pulpit, it is simple and adapted to the understanding of the unlearned. The liveliness of his imagination adorns it sufficiently to please the man of taste and education: but he rejects those decorations which contribute only to throw a veil over the subject, and to raise it above the comprehension of the multitude. He studies not to please the ear, but to convey instruction, and reform the profligate.

EVERY SENTIMENT is illustrated and enforced by the authority of tne Scriptures. The similitudes and quotations which he adduces from the inspired writings are never sought after; they always rise from the subject, and immediately strike, sometimes by the novelty, and always by the justness of their application.

THE FRUITS which always accompanied his ministry were great and lasting. After the conclusion of a discourse, the people did not form themselves into parties in order to canvass its merits and defects; but they all retired in silence, with pensive looks, downcast eyes, and sorrowful countenances. They thought not of the preacher: their attention was immovably fixed on the great and sublime truths which he had delivered.

(*The Rev. Edward Peach.*)

THOUGHT causes one to understand, the image makes one see. There will always be more eloquence in the image than in thought.

HOMILETIC MONTHLY

FEBRUARY.

Quinquagesima Sunday.—An important journey.
First Sunday in Lent.—The preparation and start.
Second Sunday in Lent --On the way.
Third Sunday in Lent.—Accidents and safety measures.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Epist. I Cor. XIII, 1-13.
Gosp. Luke XVIII, 31-43,

Subject.—*An Important Journey.*

Text.—*Behold we go up to Jerusalem.* (Gospel).

Introduction.—In a few days the season of Lent begins. Next Wednesday the cross of ashes is placed upon the brow of the Christian, to remind him that this life, with all its interests, must pass away; that we are simply pilgrims to a distant country, the heavenly Jerusalem, that is to say, the eternal City of Peace. It would be foolish for any man to undertake a journey without reflection whither he intends to go, and by what means he expects to arrive at his destination. So it is not only foolish but extremely dangerous for us Christians, to neglect thought and preparation, regarding the things which must insure our safety on the important voyage upon which we are sent by the great Master, who controls our weal or woe, according to the fidelity with which we perform the commission appointed us in our pilgrimage.

Transition.—You are therefore invited, beloved Christians, to reflect during this coming Lent, upon the character of this

important journey which each of us is forced to undertake for the accomplishment of the end of our creation. Some fail to reach the holy City when the divine Watchman comes to call them at the hour of death. Let us avoid so great a risk, and seriously reflect on

I. The absolute necessity of undertaking this journey.
II. The place whither the journey is to lead us.
III. The length of the way.
IV. The countries through which we must pass.
V. The things we need on the journey.

First Point.—We must one day leave the scenes of this present life. Experience teaches that death is the one universal law which allows of no exception. Every hearse that passes our homes to carry the dead to their graves, is an evidence of the constant operation of this law. We feel at the approach of sickness that we, too, are subject to this absolute necessity. God's unfailing word assures us of it on every page of Holy Writ. "*Hear my prayer O Lord,*" cries the royal prophet, "*for I am a stranger and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O forgive me, that I may be strengthened before I go hence, and be no more.*" Ps. xxxviii, 13, 14).

Second Point.—Whither are we travelling? The answer is plain: to eternity. The corruptible body is laid in the earth and there turns for the time to ashes. The immortal soul flies to the judgment seat of God, there to receive the verdict which determines the wanderer's everlasting abode. *It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment.* (Hebr. ix, 27.)

Heaven with all its peace and joy is our appointed home; but if through negligence of our own, we fail to reach it, utter and deepest desolation will be ours forever, without remedy.

Third Point.—Is the way to heaven long? As long as life, and that is short in every case. *The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with thee,* says Job (xiv, 5),

addressing God, *Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed.* To the same effect speaks the Wise Man: *Our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist—for our time is as the passing of a shadow; and there is no going back of our end: for it is fast sealed, and no man returneth.* (Wisd. ii, 3,5.) And mark what it is that gives value to the fleeting years of earthly life, *for venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years: but the understanding of a man is grey hairs; and a spotless life is old age.* (Ibid. iv, 8, 9). On the other hand the unprofitable life of the evil-doer renders his time still shorter: *If they live long*, says Salomon, *they shall be nothing regarded, and their late old age shall be without honor. And if they die quickly, they shall have no hope, nor speech of comfort in the days of trial; for dreadful are the ends of a wicked race.* (Wisd. iii, 17, 19).

Fourth Point.—Manifold are the regions through which man's journey to eternity carries him. Wealth, honor, joys, alternate with poverty, shame and sorrow. To-day he is buoyant with the pride of life and health, to-morrow dejected with disappointment and sickness. In the morning virtue waits on him with pious resolution, in the evening he finds himself drawn to the scenes of dangerous enjoyment. All the days of his life are a series of varying experiences from which the lessons of duty are never sufficiently learned. Longing for better things and regretful of the past, man wearies himself in search of peace. The sights he sees bewilder him, the voices he hears confuse him, unless he turn his eyes and ears away to the one place on the hill-top, the city of Sion, and look neither right nor left, caring but to reach the end of his journey, and pressing on without delay or hesitation whither the light of his Guide and Master directs.

The words of our text, *Behold we go up to Jerusalem*, refer to the journey of Christ with His disciples from the country of Perea, on the eastern side of the Jordan, through Samaria toward the mountain districts of Judea. The caravan road which the Saviour may have followed in going to the

Holy City led partly through a desert, rough and barren, partly through richly watered districts, with abundant crops and multitudes of herds grazing upon the sloping meadows. They passed by the gay and busy marts of splendid cities which to-day are utterly deserted, and where rank vegetation rises in the ruins of now silent streets. That road is an image of the world, with its changes and disappointments, and with all its seeming glory vanishing in time.

And the condition of the countries through which we pass will determine

Fifth Point.—The things we need on the journey. A traveler in our day may dispense with almost every requisite of a journey, provided he have two things—a guide-book and a well-filled purse. The guide-book will tell him everything he must know, and the money-bag will get him everything he may need. Now the guide-book to eternity is a book which instructs us about the truths and facts of faith, and directs our thoughts to heaven; the catechism, the Sacred Scriptures, devout and edifying reading of every kind.

And the treasure which will purchase every necessary and desirable object helping us on our journey to heaven is one which neither rust nor moth can consume, which thieves cannot break through and steal. *The riches of salvation*, says Isaias, the prophet, speaking of the wealth of the true believer (xxxiii, 6), are *wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.* St. Paul, writing to Timothy, bids him charge the faithful *to be rich in good works; to distribute readily; to communicate to others; to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may obtain true life* (I Timoth. vi, 18–19).

Good deeds and a habit of virtue are never-failing treasures of grace; and those who possess these in right measure are never known to want the care of our heavenly Father.

Conclusion.—This, then, is the duty of our lives, that we fix our eye upon our true destiny, which is the heavenly Jerusalem; that we dispose our steps in the direction of that

Holy City without delay, because the time is short; that we pass, alike, through hardships and pleasant scenes without being discouraged by the one or detained and turned from our purpose by the other; that we secure for ourselves, as helps on the journey, such spiritual reading as will inform our minds and elevate our hearts to the true aim of our lives; and that finally we gather a store of graces, by kind deeds and virtuous action, which will safely carry us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Epist. II Cor. VI, 1-10.
Gosp. Matth. IV, 1-11.

Subject.—*The Preparation and Start.*

Text.—*In the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the accepted time.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—We have seen, last Sunday, how man's life may be fitly compared to a journey, and how necessary it is for us to realize that we have not here on earth a lasting habitation, but are as sojourners and strangers in a land which we may soon have to leave. But it is one thing to understand our condition in life and its obligations; quite another to determine upon the manner of carrying out these obligations in a practical way. The Gospel presents to us a picture of the temptations to which our Lord, at the very beginning of His public career, was subjected. Similar temptations beset our path through life, and especially at the outset of a determined journey on the road of justice and holiness which leads to heaven.

Transition.—It will be well, therefore, to consider in what manner we are to start out, what preparations we must actually make in order to secure a safe and prosperous voyage to heaven.

When a man makes an important journey he

I. Disposes of his household affairs and settles his business obligations;
II. Secures a ticket;
III. And an insurance policy.

First Point.—It stands to reason that when you leave your home, you do not mean to destroy it, although you are never to use it again. You dispose of it to others who may dwell in it for a time and then hand it over to their successors. Now when a Christian man turns his thought to eternity and earnestly seeks the way of God, he finds many ties which bind him to those whose companionship he means to leave; he has wife and children, or parents and friends who depend upon him; or he has business relations and social duties toward his neighbor which bind him in many ways. These he cannot abandon. Justice and charity oblige him to satisfy his obligations toward his fellow man; for this is part of his own sanctification. To the man of the world, who realizes that he must return his soul to God, I would say: Pay all just claims against you as soon as ever you can; provide in the manner which suits your condition of life for those who depend on you; make your will, and in doing so let charity pure and unselfish guide your disposition of what God has bequeathed to you, that, as a steward in His service, you might turn it to the benefit of your needy brethren. Remember what the wisest and wealthiest of Kings, Salomon, says (Ecclesiastes vii, 1) of those who strive to build for themselves monuments of earthly vanity: *What needeth a man to seek things that are above him whereas he knoweth not what is profitable to him in his life, in all the days of his pilgrimage, and the time that passeth like a shadow?*

All this applies to the affairs of the soul likewise. Set the house of thy conscience in order. When this is done

Second Point.—Purchase a ticket.

Now a through ticket for the road to heaven is a good

"General Confession," with a large margin for frequent punching at the way stations, where you may have to get out to obtain provisions. Our train to heaven has neither parlor nor dining cars. They are too expensive and do not suit Catholics who have many fast-days during the year, and who do not want to eat meat on Fridays, as people, who know nothing of sacrifices for the sake of heaven, do. It is important, too, that you get your ticket at the right office. There are cheap tickets for return excursions, but you don't want to return. The cheap ticket in the spiritual order is one of those confessions which people make without real and sincere sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment. It is a return-ticket, because, though they may have got absolution nominally, they fall soon back into the old sins.

The prudent man gets his ticket at the right office. He seeks the confessor when there is time to make an honest avowal of all the weak points in his daily life, and he is prepared and well satisfied to have his ticket punched by the proper conductor, that is to say, to have himself rebuked for his errors and shortcomings in the way.

Third Point.—Not sure of what may befall us on the way, we are warned to be prepared against accidents. Death cometh like a thief at night. Hence the wise traveler supplies himself with an assurance which offers him compensation in case of loss of property or health or limb. The universal and most approved accident policy is the habit of abiding sorrow for sin.

(Explain here the nature and necessity of *perfect contrition* as an essential requisite for a happy unforseen death. Inculcate the habit of frequent short acts of contrition amid the occupations of daily life.)

Conclusion.—Having surveyed our affairs and disposed of our obligations toward the world, we turn our face in the direction of the City of Peace. With a conscience cleansed from sin, with the pass-port of the divine pardon granted in the confessional, we move securely on the road to heaven.

No accident can overtake the true Christian upon his way, for he is provided by the habit of an abiding sorrow for sin with the ever-present assurance of his heavenly Father's mercy Who wishes not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

Epist. I Thess. IV, 1-7.
Gosp. Matth. XVII, 1-9.

Subject.—*On the Way.*

Text.—*Jesus took Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The journey of life leads the Christian upon an ascending way; for heaven lies in a high region, a region of exceeding beauty, where we, like Peter and James and John, hope one day to see our Lord transfigured, glad, with St. Peter, to dwell forever in the heavenly tabernacles which God's goodness has there built for His followers.

The genius of modern times has invented a method of travel by traction. It facilitates movement, and is a faster and in many ways a more convenient system than the journeying on foot or around the mountain sides by tedious diligence as was the case in olden times.

So in the spiritual order the difficulties of travel have been very much lightened in these latter times. Our forefathers fasted long and sustained severe penances, especially during Lent; we, on the other hand, are dispensed from many of these hardships on the plea of weakness and change of circumstances, and, besides, the constantly increasing treasures of indulgence by which the voluntary sacrifices of our ancestors are placed to the credit of their children, make our way to heaven much easier and graceful than was formerly the case. Still there are some things which we cannot lose sight

of, even in these indulgent times of weakening heroism in the Christian life.

Transition.—To ascend the mountain with Christ we must take account of

I. Our position ;
II. Our surroundings ;
III. The cautions which it is wise to observe in our intercourse with officials and fellow-travelers.

First Point.—We have already seen that the first requisite for our journey is to have the right kind of a ticket. Further conditions, in order to avoid trouble and the danger of being left behind, are :

a. To be in time, so as to
b. Secure a proper place.

Punctuality in the performance of our religious duties is an excellent guarantee of peace in the heart. A man who makes his confession regularly every month or every week, who is always in time for Mass and evening devotion, will experience the blessing of God upon himself and his household. All goes well under his hands, and if God tries him at times by brief misfortune, the trial neither disturbs his mind nor renders him distrustful of the goodness of his heavenly Master.

He holds his place ; shady or sunny side, it does not effect his equanimity. Thus the faithful adherence to the habits of a well regulated Christian life begets that edifying consistency and stability in the Catholic which every one must admire and which draws others to the fountain of truth whence such strength of soul is derived.

But the right minded traveler does not look to himself exclusively.

Second Point.—He takes account of his surroundings. These surroundings are of two kinds : persons and things.

As regards persons he will, wherever necessity or a sense of charity calls for it

a. Yield his seat—to a weaker traveller; and if he have the care of little children he will

b. Place them on the seat in front of him.

So the Christian in his journey to heaven will ever take into consideration the needs of those around him. If he secure for himself what is desirable in life, it will be made to serve the purpose of drawing others to God by facilitating their sojourn amid difficulty and strife. And in this way he gladdens his own heart with the fair lights of God's pleasure and added grace, for, *if we love one another God abideth in us, and His charity is perfected in us,* (I John, iv, 12.) And again: *He that loveth his brother abideth in the right and there is no scandal in him.* (Ibid. ii, 10.)

With regard to the little ones of Christ, the children, we, their elders, owe a special love and care of them. Place them in front of you, as anxious parents do, in order that you may see and observe them, and that they may not take scandal from your own thoughtless actions. Hear what the Lord said to Moses in giving him the Law: *Thou shalt read the words of this Law before all Israel—that their children also, who are now ignorant, may hear, and fear the Lord their God.* (Deut. xxx, 11, 13.) Addressing the fathers of the Ephesians St. Paul writes: *You fathers provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.* (Eph. vi, 4.) *A son ill taught is the confusion of the father;* says the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, *and a foolish daughter shall be to his loss.* (Eccle. xxii, 3.)

Third Point.—There are certain rules of conduct, the observance of which in traveling, greatly facilitates the ease and harmony desirable on a tedious and often dangerous journey. These may be summed up in a few points as follows:

a. Have your ticket ready when demanded.

b. Don't squabble or parley needlessly with the officials of the railroad.

c. Respect the peculiarities of your fellow-passengers.

d. Observe in men and things which you see what may be profitable to you to learn.

We have already explained how confession and habitual sorrow for sin, with wholesome rebukes and corrections, may be compared to the ticket punched at many a station on the road to our ultimate destination. It sometimes happens that demands are made of a traveller by the conductor which cause the former the inconvenience of having to prove his right to hold a seat. These incidents of travel are much like the exactions from time to time by your ecclesiastical superiors whose demands may appear to you needless and severe. Thus the insistence upon a proof that you have made your Easter duty, or the obligation of taking a temperance pledge, or the difficulty and impediments to the admission of mixed marriages, or the requirement that you send your children to a Catholic school and religious instruction —all these things may seem to many unnecessary restrictions on the part of the priest. Yet they are for the general welfare, and it is our duty to comply with the regulations of the company controlling the road. A failure to do so leads to a second cause of warning, namely

The necessity of avoiding squabbles and offences with regard to your legitimate guides and superiors in spiritual matters. Among these I include not only your rightly appointed priests, but the teachers of your children, the leaders of your confraternities, sodalities and other societies conducted under the patronage of the Church. It is always disedifying to see men at variance in organized society, but it is especially so in persons who make a profession of joining a movement for the promotion of religious truth and the increase of virtuous strength in a Catholic congregation. Therefore, be subject in all humility, knowing that submitting to men who have been placed above us by the order of Providence we are simply obeying God in His representatives. Say with the Psalmist: *Shall not my soul be subject to God? for from Him is my salvation* (Ps. lxi, 1).

The same applies to our intercourse with those in whose

company our journey is to be made. The conditions of life vary in many respects. We cannot choose those with whom we would live and who are agreeable to us or a help in the struggle of life; but we may so regulate our conduct as to suffer no harm from anyone, nay to become an instrument for good toward others. *A mild answer breaketh wrath; but a harsh word stirreth up fury.* (Prov. xv, 1.)

Lastly, let us profit by what we observe in men and things around us. The faults which we most readily notice in our neighbor are often the very faults which we fail to correct in ourselves.

The prudent man looks upon the world about him as a sort of looking glass in which he compares his own appearance with the appearance of persons who are better than himself. In the admiration of their virtue he finds food for resolve to imitate the good and shun evil. On the other hand the wrongs and failings which he recognizes in his neighbor become to him a warning to avoid like faults. The whole study of a true Christian is to know himself and to know God. To such the observation of the things of nature with their order and productiveness, with their silent yet constant growth and unconscious beauty, are incitements to gratitude and sources of devout meditation for his own improvement.

Conclusion.—These are the things that must occupy us on the way up the mountain. Following, like the disciples, securely in the wake of our Lord's leading, we shall avoid becoming discouraged, and under His divine tutorship, submissive and humble, we shall learn wisdom for life eternal from all that surrounds us. Thus, firm in the faith, helpful to our brother and above all to the little ones of Christ, we shall attain to that glory of which the Apostles were vouchsafed some glimpse on Mt. Tabor, and we will be sure to abide in the Tabernacles of Heaven to witness forever the glory of God. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Epist. Ephes. V, 1-9.
Gosp. Luke XI, 14-28.

Subject.—*Accidents on the Journey.*

Text.—*Because of these things, cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—Those who undertake a journey, are liable to meet with accidents. It must be our care not only to foresee the possibilities in such cases, but to do everything in our power to prevent their occurrence, or the fatal effects which such mishaps are likely to produce—sometimes of a permanent character.

Transition.—In the journey of life we run similar risks, and need like precautions. Sometimes the danger arises from our own imprudence, sometimes, sad to think, through the carelessness of our guides and conductors, and sometimes without anyone's fault. We shall to-day briefly examine

I. The kind of accidents to which we are liable.
a. Through our own fault.
b. Through the fault of others.
c. Through no one's fault, but in the order of God's Providence.

Thence we shall draw some practical conclusions regarding our conduct in such cases.

First Point.—In many railway cars you find notices, warning the passengers not to put their heads out of the windows, and to keep off the platform until the train comes to a full stop. The object of this precaution is, to guard against accidents to the person of the traveller. Those who violate this two-fold rule are moved, generally, by curiosity on the one hand, and by a too great eagerness to get ahead of others.

Similar faults may be noticed in our religious life. *Curiosity* exposes us to many temptations which would never trouble us, if we did not thus imprudently invite them ; and he who places himself in temptation is apt to perish therein.

The *eagerness to be in the lead*, is a second source of danger to many. We desire prominence and position, because it gives honor to us and often emolument. But there are few positions of prominence in any circle, that do not carry with them an equivalent share of responsibility and duty. Now the neglect of duty is always a danger to the soul, because it involves the neglect of what is due to others, a neglect for which we have frequently no opportunity to make compensation in later life. The desire of prominence, thus becomes a source of many sins, both of pride and vanity, and likewise in regard to what is due to our neighbor. We are apt to become partial, and you know what St. James says about those who are swayed by human considerations, in their dealings of justice. *If you have respect to persons, you commit sin, being rebroved by the law as transgressors.* (Jam. ii, 9.) Already in the Old Law, God has placed this before His people : *Respect not the person of the poor, nor honor the countenance of the mighty. But judge thy neighbor according to justice.* (Leo xix, 15).

Sometimes the fault lies with those who have charge of things. The carelessness, the foolhardiness of men who take no thought in matters of importance which involve the interests of others as well as their own, provoke dangers from which the innocent must suffer. In such cases there may be a call upon us to administer fraternal correction. *He that rebuketh a man shall afterwards find favor with him more than he that by a flattering tongue deceiveth him* (Prov. xxviii, 23). Those who are simply thoughtless, but otherwise well disposed, will receive in good grace the advice given them to avert a common danger. *He that loveth correction loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is foolish* (Ibid. xii, 1.).

But there are mishaps, often serious, which come from God, and are meant for our improvement. Suffering rightly

understood and patiently endured is a great gain to the soul, and ripens it for heaven. *This is thanksworthy*, says St. Peter in his first letter, *if for conscience toward God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully, for what glory is it, if committing sin, and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thanksworthy before God: for unto this are you all called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps* (I Pet. ii, 19, 21).

Second Point.—If accidents cannot be wholly averted, nay, if they are at times necessary to rouse us from our lethargy and ingratitude or to increase our merit, they require us to be prepared for them. We must of all things

a. Keep our presence of mind;

b. Knows where to find the instruments which will help us to extricate ourselves and our neighbor in case of collision or fire;

c. Have remedies with us which may relieve suffering and avert danger of death.

Presence of mind in the case of the Christian means a constant remembrance of the presence of God. The consciousness that God watches over all our actions is a wonderful help in case of danger and prevents those frantic outbursts of despair which often bring on entire ruin because they make us lose sight of the proper means to be employed for our safety.

These means are, first of all, prayer. With prayer must be combined active service for the relief of misery, whether temporal or spiritual. Prayer and diligence in labor, especially when it benefits others, are the implements which deliver the soul from agony by employing it in the right direction, and which give efficiency to the virtue of charity.

Last of all we must provide ourselves with those remedies for the ills of life which are found in the soothing effects of mercy and meekness and patience. *I beseech you*, says the Apostle, *that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity* (Ephes. iv, 1-2). *By patience a prince shall*

be appeased, and a gentle tongue shall break hardness (Prov. xxv, 15).

Conclusion.—Such are the means by which we render harmless to our souls the accidents and trials in our journey to heaven. Take heed of them, my brethren, and especially of the panacea of patience. *The learning of a man is known by patience*, says Salomon, *and his glory is to pass over wrongs* (Prov. xix, 11). Let this be our aim and the resolution to which the holy season of Lent presently invites us in the words of the Epistle: *Walk, then, as children of the light; for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and justice and truth.* Amen.

NOTES FOR PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

DEMOSTHENES prepared himself by severe study to become in fact the force of the Athenian people (Δημοῦ Σθένος). His apprenticeship as an orator is legendary,—a subterranean retreat, hair and beard shaved, Thucydides transcribed many times, pebbles placed in his mouth, declamations on the seashore . . Tales fabricated, perhaps, but whose harmony and concord bear witness to a precocious energy which was not belied by the future. . . . Was he large or small, homely or handsome? Was he pusillanimous, versatile? The inquiry which was opened centuries ago has not solved these problems. It matters little. The imagination persists in representing to itself Demosthenes as great of body and great of heart; one does not admit that this quality of eloquence could have gushed forth from a narrow chest, could have fallen from a sordid soul. The man is to-day unanimously saluted as the equal of the orator.

A too exact stenography injures a discourse, as a too faithful photograph injures a face. In order that discourses and faces should "appear" beautiful on canvas and on vellum, they must be retouched.—Those who try to speak too well always have some misgivings as to the manner in which they have spoken.

HOMILETIC MONTHLY

MARCH.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.– A Stretch of Desert.
Passion Sunday.– On Cross Roads. (Mortification.)
Palm Sunday.—A Bridle Path. (Humility.)
Easter Sunday.—At the End of the Journey. (Heaven.)

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Epis. Galat. IV, 22–31.
Gosp. John VI, 1–15.

Subject.—*A Stretch of Desert on the Journey.*

Text.—*Jesus fled into the mountain Himself alone.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—We have in our last four sermons compared man's life to a journey which carries him through different regions full of promise, but also full of dangers and of accidents, against which he must insure himself by the only safe policy of a faithful adherence to God's holy law.

As the journey comes nearer to the end we pass often through long and dreary wastes, swept by cold storms of human suffering or by the poisonous winds of human passion. Youth is cheery and hopeful, and at the beginning of life's journey full of joy and courage; but when mature years and old age creep upon man he sees the helps on every side fail him one after another, and the scenes which once made his heart glow with enthusiasm, now leave him cold and without sympathy on earth. Man's destiny leads him through desert lands ere he reaches his heavenly home of peace and rest.

Transition.—The traveler who approaches Palestine from the South must arm himself against three dangers which he is apt to encounter in his journey through the desert wastes of the Arabian peninsula. They are: (1) want of water, (2) attacks from wild beasts, and (3) a poisonous wind called *simoom.*

In like way man on his earthly journey to the heavenly Jerusalem must pass through periods of discouragement and despondency, which may arise (1) from his own lack of trust in Providence, (2) from the attacks of evil men, (3) from allowing himself to be influenced by the prevailing notions of liberalism in religion.

Let us briefly examine these dangers and the remedies by which we may hinder them from injuring us. Most of us are subject to the influence of

I. Discouragement and despondency,
II. Attacks from evil tongues, or
III. The destructive doctrines of liberalism in religion.

First Point.—Water is one of the most necessary elements of life. We can bear hunger much longer and easier than thirst, and it is easier to satisfy the former than the latter. Hence, travelers in the East, who journey through desert places, provide themselves above all things with water.

Amid the trials of life, *despondency*, which begets a sort of dryness of the soul and renders man weary of the struggle, is one of the greatest dangers, because it often begets despair and with it a total neglect of the duties on the fulfillment of which our salvation depends. Against this danger of despondency there is one universal remedy, and that is that we place our full confidence in God. He is our Father; He has ordained our trials in order to purify us; He may seem to turn His face from us, but it is only to try our love; just as a mother sometimes turns away her face from her little one, simply because she loves to be sought and followed more eagerly by her child. There may be many things to discourage you, many dark trials ahead which seem insurmountable, but trust God and renew each day your

confidence in Him who will never abandon His faithful children.

When the water supply of the traveler in the desert is by some accident exhausted before he arrives at the end of the journey, he kills one of the camels which accompany the caravan; for that animal preserves large quantities of water, for days and days, in his stomach, so that its owner can slake his thirst for some time. In like manner it may often be necessary that we make what seems an extreme sacrifice to testify our trust in the divine providence which overlooks and cares for all, and it will save our lives from the pangs of death by the thirst of despair.

Second Point.—A second danger of our salvation comes from the *enmities* and hostile attacks of men around us. It is impossible to please all. The tooth of envy and malice will pursue virtuous persons even in their misfortune, much more so when they happen to prosper; but God has promised victory to those who put their trust in Him. Mark the sacred history of the past: Cain envied Able (Gen. iv, 6); Sarah envied Agar (ibid. xvi, 4); Laban's sons envied Jacob (ibid. xxxi, 1); Joseph's brethren envied him (ibid. xxxvii, 4); Core, Dathan, Abiron and Hon envied Moses (Num. xvi, 1); Saul envied David (I Kings xviii, 8); the Jews of Antioch envied Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii, 45); and the Chief Priests envied Jesus, for Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered Him" (Matt. xxvii, 18). Yet was not in all these cases and in every other one, where the victims of envy had placed their trust in the Lord, the victory eventually and eternally with those who suffered from the tooth of foul man for a brief span of time?

And what remedy have Christians against contention and detraction? Ah, my brethren, I am almost afraid to say it, lest you disbelieve me, because the answer is so different from the maxims of the world which we hear preached every day. Yet the eternal Truth Himself has said it: *It is an honor for a man to separate himself from quarrels* (Prov. xx, 3); *If a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away*

thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him (Matt. v, 40); *Refrain from strife and thou shalt diminish thy sins* (Eccli. xxviii, 10). In other words, avoid contentions, and rather give way to thy enemy than seek to vindicate thy rights where such vindication only creates further animosity and malicious feeling. *If a wise man*, says Salomon, *contend with a fool, whether he be angry or laugh, he shall find no rest.* (Prov. xxix, 9). *Strive not with a powerful man, lest thou fall into his hands. Strive not with a man that is full of tongue, and heap not wood upon his fire.* (Eccli. viii, 1). These are lessons full of wisdom and salvation.

Third Point.—A third danger which comes upon man in his journey of life is a certain pestilential wind called simoom, which fills the atmosphere with its hot poison and kills those who inhale it. Eastern travelers tell us that it is one of the most destructive calamities to which the region of the Holy Land was and is still subject. At its approach the distant atmosphere assumes a beautiful red or purplish color, which quickly turns into darkness as the burning blast comes closer. "All persons whom it finds standing," says a well-known Catholic writer, "it kills in a moment. The bodies of those who die from the effects of this wind soon become black. Immediately after the passing of the fatal blast, they seem like persons asleep; but if a hand or limb of these be smartly pulled, it separates from the body." When the native Arabs perceive its approach "they fall flat upon the face with the feet turned toward the point from which the wind proceeds, and the mouth firmly applied to the earth in order to avoid inhaling any portion of the poisoned atmosphere."

There is, my brethren, in the moral atmosphere of our own times a dangerous element, which, whilst it colors the distant heavens with fair promises and grand prospects, brings destruction to the very life of the soul. It is the spirit of men who teach us that we must conform to this age; that the era of progress has changed many things, and that the old laws of Christian conduct have lost their application in this glorious nineteenth century.

It is quite true, that great changes have taken place in this modern age and in this new and free land, but these changes are not such as to undo the everlasting laws of God, nor can they reconcile the sincere Christian to the spirit of this world which has always been and ever will be opposed to the severe maxims of the gospel. *There is success in evil things to a man without discipline, and there is a finding that turneth to loss* (Ecclesiastic. xx, 9). St. Paul tells his followers in express words to avoid conformity to the maxims and ways of this world: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present you your bodies a living sacrifice, *and be not conformed to this world:* but be reformed in the newness of your mind; that you may prove what is good, and the acceptable and the perfect will of God (Rom. xii, 2).

Hold on to the old truth taught you in your catechism and in the parish school, and be not carried away by every fresh wind of doctrine, even it come from those who call themselves Catholics, and whom you do not suspect because of their position and fine words. *Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you*, says St. Paul, *besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema*, and he repeats it twice over, *I say again, if any one preach to you a gospel besides the one which you have received, let him be anathema . . . for if I but pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ* (Gal. i, 8–10).

Keep your children under the direct influence of religion and prevent them by every sacrifice of which you are capable, from imbibing this false and poisonous doctrine, which knows no distinction between Catholic truth taught by God and those vague notions of duty which we hear preached under the title of the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.

Conclusion.—Arise, then, my Christian, place your confidence in God and yield not to the momentary feelings of despondency and discouragement which come from within. Your heavenly Father lives, He wants to save you, but you must not distrust Him, but cheerfully follow Him even in the dark passages of life. And if the tongues of malice pur-

sue you, return not evil for evil, but remember that God has a day of reckoning and that, by forgiving your brother, you secure your own peace both here and for eternity.

Finally, let not your hearts, or the hearts of those intrusted to your care, be exposed and influenced by the deadening maxims of this world. These easy ways in religion are productive of remorse and interior trouble at all times, but most surely at the hour of death, when they announce the danger of everlasting ruin. Be true to the faith of your fathers and God will be true to you. Amen.

PASSION SUNDAY.

Epist. Hebr. ix, 11-15.
Gosp. John viii, 46-59.

Subject.—*On Cross Roads.* (Mortification.)

Text.—*They took up stones therefore to cast at Him.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—At the meeting of ways the traveler usually finds a sign directing his steps to the desired end. At the meeting of the ways of life and death there stands a cross which points upon a stony road ascending narrow steps to heaven. We call it the *way of the Cross* and it is the path marked out by our Saviour who passed along it and who said: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me* (Matt. xvi, 24).

Transition.—And because there is no other way to salvation except this royal Way of the Cross, let us examine it more closely, for to-day is *Passion Sunday*, the day on which the Church invites her children to reflect upon the sad beginning of our Saviour's passion at the time when His Sacred Heart received the blow of marked ingratitude from the people who took up stones to hurl at their divine Benefactor.

Upon the hill that lies before the traveler in the path which follows Christ's footsteps to eternal life, there are three crosses. And we find the same number in our way on earth.

I. The Cross which God places upon our shoulders,
II. The Cross which our neighbor puts on us, and
III. The Cross which we take up at choice.

First Point.—The cross which God places upon our shoulders is of two kinds—that of *duty* and that of *suffering*. To most men who toil for their daily bread life is but a succession of crosses. So did the Creator ordain it; so did our divine Master fulfill it to give us an example, *I must work the works of Him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work* (Jo. ix, 4). The Kingdom of heaven He compares to a *householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard* (Matt. xx, 1). We are to eat our bread on earth, like our first parent, in the sweat of our brows. But whilst men might accept the tasks and duties of daily life as the cross which is to merit for them the joys of heaven, they too often divert the proper aim of all toil and seek some earthly end. One labors from necessity, another from a wish to rise in the world, a third to gain riches, and in their eager aim they forget that all things must perish and that nothing will remain of value to them except what they have done for their immortal souls.

To remind us of this God often sends other crosses, such as loss of money, of position, of health, of friends, or of whatever else a man places his poor trust in, unmindful of Him, who rules it all. We say to our souls: *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer*, when a merciful Providence calls out: *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* (Luke xii, 19). God often sends us a cross to make us thoughtful.

Second Point.—With some their special duty lies in aiding their neighbor to carry his cross; and when we willingly

do so, God lifts our own from our shoulders or gives us double strength to carry both. *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ* (Gal. vi, 1). And He, the Saviour, has carried the cross for us and laid down His life for us that we too might *lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jo. iii, 16). And so we are taught the lesson of brotherly support throughout the Sacred Text. *Be not wanting in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn. Be not slow to visit the sick, for by these things thou shalt be confirmed in love* (Ecclesiastic. vii, 38). So spoke the wise man in the Old Law, and we have the same doctrine even more emphatically in the new: *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one on the other* (1 Pet. iii, 8). *With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity* (Ep. iv, 2).

Third Point.—And last of all there are those who by acts of voluntary mortification, take up the cross of Christ and follow Him in the path of a holy life. We know from daily experience that it is difficult to keep the passions in due subjection unless we mortify the senses and keep continual watch over ourselves. *Everyone that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things; and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. I, therefore*, says the Apostle St. Paul, *so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away* (1 Cor. ix, 25). Do we not know that *from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away?* (Matt. xi, 12).

Conclusion.—Arise then, my Brethren, to the determination of taking up manfully and daily the Cross which you must carry and present as a token of your allegiance to Christ before the judgment-seat of God. Keep in the path of duty and charity and the spirit of self-denial which will direct you to the gate of heaven. Amen.

PALM SUNDAY.

Epist. Philip. II, 5-11.
Gosp. Matt. XXI, 1-9.

Subject.—*The Bridle Path.* (Humility.)

Text.—*Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—St. Luke tells us that one day when our Lord was on His way to Jerusalem, a certain man came up to Him and asked Him: *Lord are they few that are saved?* And Jesus answered: *Strive to enter by the narrow gate.* (Luk. xiii, 23.) St. Matthew uses nearly the same words: *Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there are who enter by it. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way which leadeth to life; and few there are who find it!* (Mat. vii, 13, 14.)

We may fitly compare the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life, with the virtue of humility.

Transition.—Humility teaches us to form a true estimate of ourselves and to act according to this knowledge. Its possession is of great value for *he that has been humbled shall be in glory, and he that shall bow down his eyes, he shall be saved, says Job* (xxii, 29.) In order to gain it we must

I. Examine our *real* worth.
II. Have the courage to discard our *fictitious* worth.
III. Accept humiliations.

First Point.—"To know ourselves," should be the study of our lives. Few of us see our defects as others see them; and most of us imagine themselves to possess virtues and perfections which others are wholly unconscious of. Self deception is a very common, yet also a very dangerous fault. *Let no man deceive himself*, says the Apostle, *if any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* (I. Cor. iii, 18.)

What are we?—Our bodies, fair and strong for a brief moment, are soon to become the prey of disease or the weakness of old age, and then death will turn them into corruption. As for the soul, immortal though it be in its destiny, yet if we place it before the scrutinizing eye of God, it is full of faults and sins which await judgment and condemnation. We cannot deceive the Lord, why should we boast before men whose opinion can have no value or any effect upon our final state.

Second Point.—To know one's self is great gain and the first step to humility. But self knowledge does not always give us the courage to acknowledge our unworthiness either in our words or actions towards others. Pride and shame prevent us from being true. Yet the Lord has said: *Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning.* (Job iv, 14.) Be not wise in thy own conceit; fear God and depart from evil.—*Not minding high things, but consenting to the humble.* (Rom. xii, 16.) Sometimes human respect so controls the actions of men that they go open-eyed against their convictions. Thus we read in the Gospel, that many of the chief men also believed in Christ: *but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.* (John xii, 42, 43.)

Third Point.—One test of humility, is the readiness with which a person accepts humiliations, whether they come directly from Almighty God, or through His creatures. Many of us are willing and anxious to be humble, but we would choose our methods of seeking humiliations. We will, perhaps, speak ill of ourselves, but we would not allow others to confirm our pretended sentiment, or say a depreciating or evil word of us or our intentions. We admit our faults, but we will not allow others to point them out. We are ready to take the last place when we may choose it, but we resent it when others place us there. We are prepared to

make a sacrifice of some gain, but we become angry, when others make any show of depriving us of some temporal advantage. Yet, as the Wise Man says, *it is better to be humbled with the meek, than to divide the spoils with the proud.* (Prov. xvi, 19.) Mark what our Divine Lord says to His disciples: *He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is leader, as he that serveth.* (Luke xxii, 26.)

Conclusion.—How well Salomon has said: *Where humility is there is also wisdom.* (Prov. xi, 2.) It is the wisdom of those who seek God and draw nigh to Him, a wisdom rarely esteemed by the world, and yet indispensable for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Ye young men,* says St. Peter, *be subject to the ancients. And do you all insinuate humility one to another, for God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He gives grace.* (I. Pet. v, 5.) *The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God; for great is the power of God alone, and He is honored by the humble.* (Ecclesiastic. iii, 20.) Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Epist. I Cor. V, 7-8.
Gosp. Mark. XVI, 1-7.

Subject.—*Heaven—the happy end of our journey.*

Text.—*Then you shall see Him as He told you.*

Introduction.—It was in Galilee that the disciples were to see their risen Master, but the vision then was to be but passing. Thither He had preceded them, but beyond He was to go to prepare them a home in His Father's House. There they could see and enjoy Him perfectly. How the hearts of those

ever afterwards faithful followers of their risen Saviour must have glowed with the thought of the beautiful home to which they were going, glimpses of whose peace and ineffable joys some of them had been privileged to catch!

For us, too, the magic of that word, even when applied to the transient resting place of our earthly pilgrimage, casts a spell of peace and joy over mind and heart. How much more potent should it be when it tells of those mansions which the Son of God has prepared in His and our Father's House, whose beauty no mortal eye has seen, whose music ear has never heard, whose blissfulness it has never entered mortal heart to conceive. Our home is beyond the grave. Death is the portal where our weary wanderings end. And to-day we celebrate the joyous entrance of our King and Leader who, by His triumph over sin, has opened the gates for us and conquered death, which henceforth is swallowed up in the victory of the Resurrection.

Transition.—Whilst we enter freely into the joyous spirit of this glorious day, which, indeed, the Lord has made; and whilst in easy obedience to the voice of our holy Mother, the Church, we "exult and rejoice," the thought of our gain if one day we may follow our crucified but also risen Saviour, must for a brief moment occupy our minds and arouse feelings of gratitude to Him who has chosen us, among the thousands of men, to be children of His fold and co-heirs of His Kingdom; which is—

I. A Home where there is no evil;
II. A Home where there is every joy.

First Point.—It is the sad experience of all of us to know some of the bitterness of human suffering, whether it be sorrow of soul, with its phases of darkness and doubt, or those miseries of the body to which all flesh is heir from its very beginning.

But in heaven, our longed-for home, there will be no more disappointment, no more affliction of spirit. There *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and death shall be no more,*

nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. (Apoc. xxi, 4.) The darkness which so often overshadows our days and renders even our joys full of uncertainty and apprehension, shall be no more, and the children of God will *not need the light of a lamp, for the Lord God will enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.* (Apoc. xxii, 5.) *I will turn their mourning into joy*, says the prophet, foreseeing the beauty of those days, *and will comfort them* (Jer. xxxi, 13); *as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.* (Isa. lxvi, 13.) Nor will there be any fear that this immunity from human affliction shall ever cease, as is the case with the goods and gifts of earth. In heaven you shall no more hunger nor thirst, *you shall flourish*, says Isaiah, *like an herb, and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants.* Such is the effect of Christ's victory for those who hearken to His words, and this He meant when He said: "*If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever.* (John viii, 52.)

Second Point.—But exemption from evil is not the sole fruit of Christ's Resurrection for those who have followed Him. How glad many of us would be if we could but lay down the burden of life and be assured of everlasting rest. Oh that we could realize how much more God has in store for His faithful servants! *We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is* (1 John iii, 2). The beatific vision implies whatever beauty there exists in heaven and on earth. There is no desire of which the human heart is capable which will not there find its full accomplishment. *My people shall sit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacle of confidence and in wealthy rest* (Isa. xxii, 18).

There shall be the joy of holy companionship, the truest friendship without shadow of deception and disappointment. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, for there the Lord hath commanded blessing and life for evermore*, says the royal Psalmist. Those

who long for knowledge shall have their desires satiated to the full at the Fountain of all Truth. The senses shall crave for naught, since all things worthy of enjoyment will be in abundance. We *shall be inebriated with the plenty of God's house.* Eternal praise and delightful music shall fill our souls, and the air will be full of the odors of sweetness.

Conclusion.—*Blessed*, indeed, my brethren, *are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill* (Matt. v, 6). But, mark it, not all that bear the name of our holy King are sure to enter His royal mansions. *Lord*, asks the Psalmist, *who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle or who shall rest in Thy holy hill?* and he gives this inspired answer: *He that walketh without blemish, and worketh justice; and he that speaketh truth in his heart; who has not used deceit in his tongue; nor hath done evil to his neighbor; nor taken up a reproach against his neighbor. He that sweareth to his neighbor and deceiveth not; he that hath not put out his money to usury, nor taken bribes against the innocent. He that doth these things shall not be moved for ever* (Ps. xiv, 1-5).

This is the sum of the cost of the victory in which we hope to participate and of which we celebrate to-day the joyous remembrance. Renew then, with your Allelujah of gratitude, the hearty resolution to carry faithfully unto the end of your earthly journey the burdens and crosses of life, so that one day you may follow the Lamb in endless triumph and never-ending joys of the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

NOTES FOR PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

UNITY OF THE SERMON.

THE fact that a sermon addresses itself to the ear rather than to the eye, makes it necessary that it should possess *unity*. In looking at a marble relief the eye is confined to the material surface of the image, and thus always receives the impression of unity, although the piece may in itself

present a lack of unity and show disproportion of parts. In a sermon, on the other hand, the hearer has to collect the parts by his own mental activity into an orderly whole, a process of which most hearers are either incapable or else lack the energy and time whilst they follow the discourse. For this reason it is requisite in a good discourse to keep out every reflection which does not directly bear upon the fundamental thought of the composition. More than this. Not only must every foreign, odd, useless and divergent element, however practical or beautiful in itself, be kept out, but there must be a similarity of sentiment and a harmonious growth of the parts, so that each supports, explains and enhances the rest. Just as is done in an architectural work which is truly built upon the plan of some definite style. *La véritable éloquence*, observes Rochefoucauld very justly in his "Maximes," *consiste à dire tout ce qu'il faut, et à ne rien dire que ce qu'il faut.* (Hettinger, Aphorismen.)

HOW TO MOVE.

Hugh Blair says that there is but one sure means of moving an audience, and that is that the orator be himself moved by what he says. True feeling suggests a thousand forms which no art can imitate and which not even the keenest observation can supply. The passions move by a sort of contagion. The fact that the orator is touched by the pathos of his subject gives to his words, his looks, his gestures, in short to his whole expression an emphasis, which takes hold upon the hearer with almost irresistible power.

The question, which Quintilian put long ago, namely—How is the orator moved? is answered by himself as follows: "Tentabo hoc dicere. Quas *phantasias* Graeci appellant. . . per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo, ut eas cernere oculis, ac praesentes habere videamur; has quisquis bene conceperit, is erit in affectibus potentissimus." In other words the speaker must apply himself to realize the truth of his plea by meditating it and so arousing his imagination, that he feels and sees mentally what he wishes others to feel and see.

From the Christian Fathers.

(*Christ's Passion.*)

"The Cross of Christ is the Key to Paradise, the staff of the weak, the guiding star of the repentant sinner, the shield of the faithful, the sword of those who are attacked by temptation, the magnet which attracts the loving heart, and the store-house of every grace." (St. Damasus, i, 4.)

"Before the death of our Lord on the Cross, there was no ladder that reached to the gates of heaven; hence, neither Abraham, nor Jacob, nor David, beloved by God, nor any man could enter there. But with the raising up of the Cross of Christ a wondrous ladder was placed against heaven and its doors immediately swung open." (St. Augustine, serm. 79 de Temp.)

"Come and see the wounds of thy Lord hanging upon the Cross, blood streaming down from the body of thy royal Master who dies to save thee: His head is bent to kiss thee, His heart is opened to love thee, His arms spread out to embrace thee. Ah! let Him be fastened unto thy heart as firmly as He was fastened unto that Cross." (Id. in Lib. de Virg.)

"Behold all creation is crushed as in suffering with Christ, its Lord, now crucified! The sun grows dark, the earth trembles, the rocks burst asunder, the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, the tombs vomit forth their dead—thou only, O man of sin, on whose account Christ suffered, refusest to suffer with Him. (St. Jerome, Matth.)

(*Christ's Resurrection.*)

"In the resurrection of Christ you have at once a *miracle* and an *example;* a miracle, in order that you may believe; an example, in order that you may have confidence and hope of your own resurrection." (St. Augustine, in Psalm 129.)

HOMILETIC MONTHLY

APRIL.

Low Sunday.—The Lifting of the Hammer.
Second Sunday after Easter.—The Ways of the Wolf.
Third Sunday after Easter.—Good Citizenship.
Fourth Sunday after Easter.—What Prevents Us from Understanding God.
Fifth Sunday after Easter.—A True Looking-Glass.

LOW SUNDAY (FIRST AFTER EASTER).

Epist. I John V, 4-10.
Gosp. John XX, 19-31.

Subject.—*The Lifting of the Hammer.*

Text.—*Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* (Epist.)

Introduction.—In the prophecy of Zacharias (chap. i, 21) we read that the Lord showed to him in a vision, the four great empires of the world in the shape of four brazen horns lifted up against the people of God; and then he saw again four mighty workmen who came and broke the horns into fragments.

The prophecy is an image of the great powers of the world warring against the Church of Christ. From that Church there shall come forth workmen who will destroy with a mighty blow the arrogant pretensions of the world. The hammer with which they will do this is the faith of Jesus Christ which will overcome the world, for, as we read in to-day's Epistle, *this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith.*

Transition.—Let us briefly study the image drawn from the prophet and apply it to our spiritual profit.

If you watch the action of a smith as he welds the flexible mass, or breaks into fragments that which is hardened and brittle, you notice

a. that he first fixes his aim ;

b. then slowly moves his hammer up into the air and away from the object to be smitten ; and

c. finally, lets the weight of the hammer fall down upon it with irresistible power.

So God acts toward the world.

a. He fixes the eye of His justice, with unfailing aim upon the doings of the children of men ;

b. His slowly *receding* arm appears to the thoughtless a sign that God will not punish, whilst in reality it indicates that His justice is preparing for the final blow.

c. The weight of the hammer is the crushing truth of our holy faith which will convict those who have deliberately resisted its teachings and admonitions, and will prove their destruction.

First Point.—The aim of the smith signifies the purpose of God in regard to the world. Our heavenly Father has assigned to the children of men a sphere of truth and right ; and He has marked the limits where sin and wrong begins. If man transgress these limits deliberately, he exposes himself to the danger of being forever destroyed. Those of us who give themselves to the service of sin, place themselves within that awful circle, that proud world upon which God has fixed the look of His justice, and which will one day crumble into ruin under the avenging strokes of the last judgment.

This God has made clear to His creatures from the beginning of the world. *Consider*, He says in the Book of Deuteronomy (xxx, 15, 16), *that I have set before thee this day life and good, and, on the other hand, death and evil ; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways and keep His commandments.* And centuries after, the prophet Isaias repeats the same warning in the name of God to the

people of his time: *If you be willing and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land; but if you will not, and will provoke me to wrath, the sword shall devour you.* (Is. i, 19.)

(Develop the thought of the all seeing eye of God and the care with which His angel records every action of man.)

Second Point.—The worldly man whose heart has accustomed itself to forgetfulness of God and His precepts, lives on in a false security. He considers death at a distance, and because the chastizing hand of God ceases finally to remind him, as it reminds those who will listen to such warnings, of the short-lived condition of all worldly success, the prosperous sinner sees in the glory and satisfaction which he enjoys for a time, a proof that there is no God who will bring him to account. Listen, what holy Job says, who was himself a wealthy and prosperous man, but was humbled by the mighty hand of Jehova because the Lord wished to try his virtue: *Why then do the wicked live*, he asks, looking out upon the worldly men who glory in their temporal success, *they spend their days in wealth, who have said to God: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him?* (Job xxi, 7). And now hear how the royal prophet answers to that same question: *Be not thou afraid when a man shall be made rich and when the glory of his house shall be increased—for when he shall die he shall take nothing away; nor shall his glory descend with him.—As the dream of them that awake, O Lord, so in Thy City Thou shalt bring their image to nothing.* (Ps. 72 and 143.) *There is a success in evil things to a man without discipline, and there is a finding that tnrneth to loss.* (Eccli. xx, 9).

Third Point.—That which blinds us to the truth of our danger amid the prosperity of the world is a want of deep and living faith. Without this gift of faith we neither see that which is hurtful to our souls, nor can we, when at length death comes to open our eyes, avoid the destruction which falls upon us with the crushing weight of a last judgment.

God has given us a warning against this awful doom by the teachings of our holy faith. That faith tells us that we must not place our hope in the things of this world. It bids us imitate our Lord and fulfil the tasks of our lives according to the precepts He has laid down for our guidance. *May the communication of thy faith be made evident in the acknowledgment of every good work that is in you in Christ Jesus;* so writes the Apostle to Philemon (i, 6).

Truly, my brethren, our faith is our strength. It turns away the mighty arm of the avenging God, which is perhaps lifted at this moment to destroy us because of our sins. On the other hand that faith may become our destruction if we do not act according to it, if we remain passive and idle in the sphere of those who only live for this world. *Do you see* says St. James (ii, 24) *that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?* And again: *To him therefore, who knoweth how to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin* (iv, 17).

Conclusion.—Look then, my brethren, that you may gain the victory which your faith assuredly promises to you. *God is not as a man, that He should lie, nor as the son of man that He should be changed. Hath He then said, and will He not do? Has He spoken and will He not fulfill?* (Numb. xxiii, 19). Hence *labor the more that by good works you may make sure your vocation and election. For doing these things you shall not sin at any time.* (II Pet. i, 10.)

Every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward. (I Cor. iii, 12.)

Watch then the arm of God, which, like that of a mighty smith, holds the hammer over the evil-doer. *The axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire.* (Matt. iii, 10.) Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Ep. I Pet. II, 21–25.
Gosp. John X, 11–16.

Subject.—*The ways of the wolf.*

Text.—*And the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Our Lord places before the Pharisees the kindly care with which the good shepherd watches his flock against the attacks of the wolf. His purpose is to point out the dangers from which the faithful people of God are likely to suffer.

Transition.—In order to understand the character of these dangers we have only to study the character of the wolf. Naturalists tell us of this most dangerous animal that his principal traits are :

a. Cunning in catching his prey ;
b. Cruelty in disposing of it, and
c. Cowardice when captured.

The animal which he most persistently follows is the sheep. Its characteristics are the very opposite from those of its enemy, namely, simplicity and gentleness. It shall be our object to-day briefly to point out the contrast between the wolf and the sheep and to show how the latter may avoid the snares and persecutions of the former.

First Point.—The wolf is extremely cunning. He possesses all the caution together with the agility of the fox. It is said of this animal that he will never enter an open gate, if there be another way to reach his prey, such as leaping over a wall or waiting in ambush until the unsuspecting victim leaves its fold. A wolf in search of a lamb from the flock will feign death or imitate the ways of the watchdog in order to deceive the sheep.

Just in the same manner do they act who wish to rob you of your faith and your virtue. They approach the faithful

flock in all manner of extraordinary ways. They never enter the gate of the fold like the Good Shepherd, teaching the old and simple truths of the Gospel. But they leap over the wall, that is, they present to you the high sounding notions of modern progress, culture and intelligence; and by such means they corrupt the unsuspecting people who read their papers and books full of a dangerous liberalism and a hidden infidelity which saps all confidence in legitimate authority and arouses desires which can never be fulfilled.

Their special aim is to catch the young, and they manage to draw them by various deceptions pretending that they wish to guard and protect them and lead them on to greater liberty and independence. Sometimes these wolves appear in sheep's clothing, in the form of piety, even as priests, teaching their perverse but attractive doctrines.

Against such false teachers our Lord Himself has thought it necessary to warn us, when He says: *Beware of the false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.* (St. Matt. vii, 15.)

Second Point.—The cruelty of these false teachers shows itself especially in this that they corrupt the young of the flock. They seek to withdraw the Catholic child from the influence of Christian education, by advocating a general acceptance of the irreligious plan that is used in the common schools and which may satisfy parents who have no religion, but can never fulfill the requirements of a faithful and wise Catholic father or mother. As it is the cruel delight of the wolf to scatter the sheep and destroy the lambs even when he has satisfied his bloodthirsty craving, so the enemies of the Church would scatter the flock of Christ and destroy our little ones by persuading parents that it is for their good to imbibe knowledge which ignores God.

And that which is most to be lamented in all this struggle of the darkness against the true light is that even in the Catholic Church men are to be found who through a mistaken zeal advocate such cruel principles by which the life

blood is drawn out of the Catholic Church. Justly indeed did the Apostle warn his flock even in those early times of Catholic faith when martyrs shed their blood in abundance to prove the superiority of the wisdom of the simple Gospel to the pagan philosophy of the Greeks and Romans: *I know*, he says, *that after my departure ravenous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves will rise up men speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch!* (Acts xx, 29.)

Third Point.—But there is another feature which distinguishes the wolf, despite his habitual cruelty, and that is his cowardice when he is captured. Where there is a crowd of wolves together they will attack a man, but singly they never attempt to face even an unarmed person. You will notice the same feature in the bold advocates of liberalism. They are only strong when in the majority, singly they are incapable of facing an honest man who knows how to defend the principles of his faith.

This suggests to every Catholic the wisdom and duty of boldly vindicating the rights of his holy religion. Be a man, and the wolf will not dare to attack or follow you or your children. Defend the lessons that have been taught you in your Catechism and you will be stronger than those who persecute you for your faith. That faith teaches a wisdom which overcomes the world, but it requires that prudence be united to the simplicity of virtue. Hence our Lord sent His disciples into the world for the purpose of gaining it unto the faith, with these remarkable words: *Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.* (St. Matt. x, 16.) Thus the sheep is sure to escape, nay to conquer the ravenous wolf or send him to flight by the strength of that prudence and simplicity which the divine Shepherd imparts to His own.

Conclusion.—Hold then together, my brethren, in the bond of Christian charity. Protect above all your children from the irreligious spirit of these times. The sheep keep close to-

gether ; their lambs are ever within sight and all follow the leader in trustful simplicity. So let us follow our divine Shepherd and hear His voice which warns us against the dangers that threaten on the ways of earth. In His wake there is no error, no deceptive pitfalls, and He leads us safely to eternal pastures where we shall have nothing more to fear from the enemies of our souls, for there is only happiness and secure joy for ever. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Epist. I Pet. II, 11-19.
Gosp. John XVI, 16-22.

Subject.—*Good citizenship.*

Text.—*Be ye subject therefore—whether it be to the king as excelling or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of the good; for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—It is an old calumny urged against the children of the Catholic Church that they are a danger to the commonwealth because of their religious creed which makes it impossible for them to be good Catholics and at the same time good citizens. The same accusation was made against our Lord, and in truth it was the principal charge which caused Him to be condemned to the ignominious death of the Cross. For we read that Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitude: *I find no cause in this man. But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people.* And shortly after in the same chapter of St. Luke (xxiii, 13) we have: *Then Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have brought this man to me, as one that per-*

verteth the people, and behold, I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man touching those things wherein you accuse him. This meant that our Lord had been falsely charged with secret sedition against the government.

We need not then be surprised that the same or similar things would be said of the followers of Christ. Let us see whether the charge be true by examining briefly what the Catholic Church teaches on this subject of loyalty and good citizenship, and also what has been the practice in this matter of those who are really faithful believers of our holy religion.

Transition.—The test of good citizenship may be said to consist in three qualities principally, namely in

a. Obedience to the just laws of the land ;
b. Industrious co-operation in the prosperity of the commonwealth ;
c. Social peace and harmony among the citizens.

What does our holy religion, as taught in the Catholic Church, exact from its members on these three points, and what has been the practice of those who are held up as models for the imitation of Catholics? The answer is plainly written in the books of Catholic doctrine and in the conduct of the saints whom the Church has honored in all ages.

First Point.—*Obedience to law* is a fundamental precept in the Church, which rests upon the teaching of holy Scripture. We have heard in to-day's Epistle how St. Paul wishes us to be subject to the king, that is to say, to the legitimate civil rulers of the land. Elsewhere he says: *Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God.—Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.* (Rom. xiii, 1-3). To Titus, his beloved disciple, he gives directions how to rule as a Bishop: *Admonish them (the faithful) to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word,*

to be ready to every good work. (Tit. iii, 1.) In the same way he inculcates submission to ecclesiastical superiors. *Obey your prelates*, he writes to the Hebrews (xiii, 17), *and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy and not with grief; for this is not expedient to you.*

Nor does this obligation of reverence and obedience extend only to those superiors whom we consider good and worthy. Our Lord had said to the Jews: *The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say unto you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not.* And St. Peter, the great ruler and teacher of the Catholic Church, in whose chair the Sovereign Pontiffs have sat from his day unto our own, writes to the simple faithful that they should make no distinction between their obedience to good or bad masters. *Be subject to your masters, with all fear, and not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* (I Pet. ii, 18.)

And this obedience is not to be merely external, but it is to come from the heart. Be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ.—*Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.* (Eph. vi, 5.)

That the Church wishes these precepts to be carried out by her children, she shows by constantly preaching them and holding up to the imitation of the faithful the examples ancient and modern which history presents. The lives of Catholic Saints, canonized by the Church in order to become a pattern of our conduct, are immortal witnesses to the sacrifices which religion has inspired for the love of country. Not to mention the heroes of the early Christian times, such as St. Sebastian, St. Eustachius, St. Maurice and his gallant soldier band, have we not in more recent times a glorious example of inspired valor in that lovely maiden, the fair servant of God, Joan of Arc, whose canonization the Catholic world awaits in these very days? Surely it was religion that gave her the courage to free her country from an oppressive

enemy and to purify by her own sweet virtue the body of her people from the vices and corruptions which enervated the army.

Second Point.—That the Catholic Church honors labor, and that her children contribute by the toil of their hands and the work of their intellects to the prosperity of the nation, needs no proof. She alone affords the example of thousands of religious men and women devoting themselves to the service of the poor, to the instruction in letters and mechanics of otherwise abandoned children. She teaches us that man can save his soul only by labor and prayer, and that he who has gained enough for his own support must assist his needy brother who may be unable to obtain life's necessaries by the labor of his hands. *Every man*, says the Apostle (I Cor. iii, 8), *shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor.* The Wise Man's word is addressed to every child of earth: *Hate not laborious works* (Eccli. vii, 16), but *whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly* (Eccl. ix, 10); *for it is man's lot on earth to gain a heavenly reward by the sweat of his brow until he return to the earth out of which he was taken.* (Gen. iii, 19.)

Third Point.—Where men labor faithfully and from supernatural motives to fulfill the obligations of their respective state of life, there too will be found that harmony and peace which contributes to the common welfare of the land. *With three things*, says King Salomon, *my spirit is pleased, which are approved before God and men: the concord of brethren, and the love of neighbors, and man and wife that agree well* (Eccli. xxv, 1-2). Harmony of action, charity toward one another, and domestic peace of the family, these are the strong foundations of a prosperous people. *A brother that is helped by a brother is like a strong city* (Prov. xviii, 19). *Behold*, cries out the royal prophet, *how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.—For those has the Lord commanded blessing and life for evermore.* (Ps. cxxxii, 1, 4.)

(Picture the true religious life of the monastic institutions, etc., as an example.)

Conclusion.—Such are the maxims which the Catholic Church places before us constantly and everywhere. They are surely such as make good citizens, not only of those who serve the State in the ordinary avocations of life, but likewise in religious communities, which are so to say the best schools of true and noble citizenship by their teaching and beneficence. It does not matter that the world should fail to recognize this truth. We serve our heavenly King, and for His sake are subject to all earthly power; *for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free and not as making liberty a cloak of malice, but as the servants of God* (Epistle). Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Epist. James I, 17-21.
Gosp. John XVI, 5-14.

Subject.—*What prevents us from understanding God.*

Text.—*I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—It must seem strange at first sight to many, that our divine Lord who had come to teach the world His heavenly doctrine, should, after three years of constant intercourse with His disciples, tell them that there are some things which He wishes to tell them, yet which He keeps from them until the Holy Ghost would come to declare them through His divinely instituted Church.

Yet the wisdom of our Saviour will be apparent when we reflect upon the cause of this concealment of what seemed to be so necessary for them to know.

Transition.—Our Lord assigns this cause, when He says: "You cannot hear these things now." Why could they not hear them? Because the truths of the Catholic Church founded by Christ require a mind and heart rightly prepared for their proper appreciation. This teaches us the two-fold lesson of weighing

I. The obstacles which hinder the operations of a living faith within us, and

II. The means which we must employ to secure its beneficent work in our souls.

First Point.—That which prevents the healthy action of the blessed gift of faith received by each of us in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation is

a. Prejudice,
b. Want of reflection,
c. Attachment to worldly affairs,
d. Cares and troubles of life,
e. Self-indulgence and deliberate sin.

The Apostles and disciples of our Lord, although of good disposition and full of admiration for their holy Master, had not as yet divested themselves of certain prejudices which made them refer the promises of Christ, as their King, to an earthly kingdom and to worldly advantages. (Note the petition of the mother of the Zebedees, and the conduct and flight of the Apostles in the Garden of Olives.) They were still subject to doubts and fear, to human attachments which betokened a want of confidence in God; nay, he who became the greatest of the Apostles proved by his deliberate denial of our Lord that the sin of human respect had still a strong hold upon him who had promised so confidently that he would never forsake his Master.

Second Point.—In order that the life-giving element placed in our hearts may bear its proper fruit, two things are principally required:

a. First of all, that we do not act against those warnings and lights which conscience and the natural law hold before us. Every man knows the ten commandments; they need hardly be taught him, for they are written upon the heart. The child blushes when it tells a lie long before it has learned its Catechism. Why? Because it is written in its young heart: "Thou shalt not lie." And so it is with the other commandments of the Law. They indicate the will of God, and those who comply with that will, to them our heavenly Father gives the knowledge of other Christian truths which cannot be known by natural reason but are the subject of faith as taught in the Catholic Church. *If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* (John xvi, 17.)

Those who live a natural good life, doing the things which they know in their hearts to be right, to them God gives the light of faith and as a rule they become Catholics sooner or later. And if they are already possessed of the priceless gift, then fidelity to that which they know makes them continually better and better; they grow more like their heavenly Father who has adopted them as His children. *As many as received Him*, says the Beloved Disciple, *He gave them power to be made the sons of God* (i, 12).

b. With this fidelity to the natural light of conscience goes a second quality of soul in those who endeavor to make their faith truly living. It is docility to the teaching of the Church. Our Lord did not teach everything, as He Himself says. *When he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will teach you all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but what things soever he shall hear he shall speak.* (Gospel.) What other spirit can this be that does not speak of himself, unless it be the infallible Spirit which dwells in the Church, guiding her in all matters of doctrine and discipline.

Conclusion.—*Stand fast*, therefore, *in the faith.* (I Cor. xvi, 13). Do not be carried away with every novelty of doctrine, but leading sober and good lives, let your hearts and minds be open to the truth of Christ, the truth which is as old as God and never changes. Let not the reproach of St. Paul to the Galatians apply to us when he says: *O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been set forth crucified among you?* (Gal. iii, 1.) But rather *labor the more that by good works you may make sure of your calling and election.* (II Pet. i, 10.) Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Epist. James I, 22–27.
Gosp. John XVI, 23–30.

Subject.—*A True Looking-glass.*

Text.—*He shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—The Apostle compares a person who hears the Word of God but does not take the trouble to carry out the truth which it inculcates, to a man beholding himself in a glass and forthwith forgetting how he looked. Looking-glasses have a useful purpose; but on the whole they are the invention of vanity, and people look into them much oftener for the purpose of persuading themselves that they look well than to know the truth. Otherwise why should they look so often and so long, even when there is no reason to be anxious about appearances? And because this weakness is generally known, those who make looking-glasses have found out a way of making them flatter the beholder. *The world wants to be deceived*, said our Lord, and the buyers and sellers of mirrors prove it beyond a doubt.

Transition.—There is, however, one kind of looking-glass which does not deceive and the use of which not only keeps us from being vain by persuading us that we are not beautiful, but it actually makes us more beautiful the oftener we look into it, provided we are rightly disposed and wish to improve both our looks and our whole selves. That looking-glass is attached to the *confessional box*. To profit by its magic influence we have to observe a certain method of viewing ourselves in it. This method consists:

First Point.—In *dressing* well—that is, in preparing our conscience carefully;

Second Point.—In *speaking* well—that is, in telling our faults with their unvarnished ugliness, number and kind and, sometimes, circumstances.

Third Point.—In *remembering* well our real physiognomy—which is done most effectually by going there frequently and studying our faults and carrying out the lessons which our Confessor gives us.

Fourth Point.—Some persons go even farther and make a copy of their figure, an outline which they look over each day and examine the slight faults and infidelities, which they then correct. Strange to say, each correction of this picture actually affects their person, so that the face and manner and speech, in short the whole deportment becomes pleasing to every one around them and even more pleasing to the angels in heaven and to Almighty God.

Conclusion.—Let me persuade you, my brethren, to make use of this excellent looking-glass, which improves us and renders us so beautiful because it gives an expression of peace and contentment to the countenance and to the whole manner of our living which is a reflection of our divine Saviour's beauty. It is indeed He who works the change by making us like unto Him who was the most beautiful of the children of men. With our eyes fixed on Him we cannot fail to be attracted by the charm of His comeliness which assures us of the blessed hope and coming of His glory in the land of all true and undying beauty. Amen.

HOMILETIC MONTHLY

MAY.

Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension —The Perfect Cloak.
Pentecost.—The Peace of Christ.
Trinity Sunday.—Our Wonderful Teacher.
Second Sunday after Pentecost.—The Invitation.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

Epist. I Peter IV, 7-11.
Gosp. John XV, 26; XVI, 4.

Subject.—*The Perfect Cloak.*

Text.—*For charity covereth a multitude of sins.* (Epist.)

Introduction.—The sacred writers are accustomed to speak of virtue and vice in man as a garment, a robe or a cloak. Thus Isaias, prophesying the wonderful blessings of the Christian religion speaks of its adherents as souls whom God has *clothed with the garments of salvation and with the robe of justice* (Isa. lxi, 10). In the words of our text St. Peter makes use of a like comparison when he says that *charity covereth a multitude of sins*; for the virtue of charity is a kind of spiritual cloak in which we may securely wrap ourselves and find protection against the cold blasts of sin and malice. In truth we cannot be saved without this garment of charity, because it is the one in which we are to appear at the mercy seat of our heavenly Judge, and by which we are to be recognized as belonging to His faithful band of followers.

Hence it is important that we should secure for ourselves this saving cloak before the severe season of eternity come

upon us, leaving us poor and naked through our own negligence.

Transition.—When men purchase a garment or a cloak for the winter season they are careful to see that the article be

I. Warm ;
II. Of good material ;
III. Well fitting ; and
IV. Of a reasonable price.

Now, in the matter of charity, precisely the same things are required to make it a proper habit for the clothing of our souls. True charity is

I. Warm, *i. e.*, proceeds from the heart ;
II. Substantial, *i. e.*, consists not in words but in actions ;
III. Well fitting, *i. e.*, observant of outward conduct ;
IV. A good investment, because it never taxes us above our means.

First Point.—It is a characteristic of true charity that it proceeds from the heart. We value the smallest gift, if it represents to us the token of affection, far above the rewards of merit. A word of advice from a friend or superior affects us more when we know it to proceed from love for us than the promise of advantage or the influence of authority, however much we may esteem it. A kind word to the poor and unfortunate is often a greater boon to them than material assistance, if they know that our sympathy is real and warm-hearted. We ourselves can bear the hardships and disappointments of life much more easily when we feel that there is a friend who really compassionates us.

Such is the charity which God commands as the fulfilment of the Law and with which the Apostle wishes his faithful people to be clothed—*charity*, as he writes to the Thessalonians (I Thes. i, 5), *from a pure heart, and a good conscience and an unfeigned faith.*

Second Point.—But whilst true charity resides in the heart from which all good will towards our brother springs, it

is not a mere feeling, however sincere, but it shows itself in consistent activity according to the means in its power. A warm cloak is usually also a substantial coat, made of good and strong cloth ; but not always. There is a cloth which is warm but it does not last long, because it is loosely woven and lacks strength of fibre and thread.

So it is with charity. There is a sympathy of the heart which spends itself in words, but lacks the consistency of action ; a kindness which is warm-hearted and anxious, but which shrinks when hard deeds are required. Hence the Apostle of Love, St. John (i, 3, 18), well says : *Let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* And in the same sense St. Paul bids the Romans to love each other, thereby fulfilling the whole law, for *he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law* (Rom. xiii, 8). Such charity makes itself felt in all the ways of life, for it is *patient, is kind ; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely ; is not puffed up ; is not ambitious ; seeks not her own ; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity ; but rejoiceth with the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things* (I Cor. xiii, 4-7).

Third Point.—Nor is this all. There is a gracefulness about true charity which attracts even by its exterior. When we purchase a garment we are anxious to have it look well, to be a good fit, so as to present a becoming appearance. And so it should be with charity. It should have a pleasant and agreeable exterior. We can imagine people to be very kind hearted and really helpful when there is need of doing a good work, but they have a gruff manner, a rude way of speech or action which repels us, even when we know that there is a benevolent heart beneath it all. How much more beautiful does a person appear to us when he or she unites to a gentle, sympathetic heart, also that kindly manner which wins confidence and encourages even by its outward appearance. This is the habit of true virtue, of true charity which acts like a pleasant light to all around it. Listen to what an experienced man of the world writes upon

this subject: "One may be unsupportable," he says, "even with virtue, talent and right conduct. Manners, which good people sometimes neglect as trifles unworthy of notice, are just those very things from which others often judge as to our character, deciding whether it be good or bad. A slight attention to exterior manner which keeps us gentle and polite, prevents an unfavorable judgment. Almost anything is sufficient to cause others to consider us proud, uncivil, scornful or disobliging; and yet less than this will cause us to be esteemed quite the reverse." (La Bruyère.)

We have no right to make others feel disagreeable by our conduct and we often fail to do them good by kindness of manner, which costs us nothing but an effort, and increases our own happiness as well as that of those with whom we live. And this is the fourth quality of a good cloak, namely, that

Fourth Point.—It is cheap. Christian charity, considering its value, is something that even the poorest can afford to purchase, and that too of the very best material. We sometimes hear good-hearted people say, that if they were rich they would do a great many charitable things. Well, let them thank God that they are not rich, because then they might change their minds. As we have seen charity has its root in the heart, and it manifests itself in helping our neighbor according to our ability. We can obtain that virtue at a little sacrifice of self-will which costs no money and which everybody has who has a human heart and the Catholic Church to teach him how to use that human heart for the gaining of a heavenly inheritance.

There is another peculiarity about this cloak of charity. Not only can we get it at a very small sacrifice, or even without any payment of money, but it makes money for us inasmuch as it pays off our most important debts. Every one of us owes something to Almighty God. We have committed sins for which we must some day render satisfaction. We are all more or less in the position of the steward in the Gospel to whom his master said that he would not be released

until he had paid the last farthing. Now we have heard that *charity covereth a multitude of sins*, that is to say, this grand cloak of brotherly love, which is one with the love of God will undo all our sins before the face of our Judge. *He that loveth God*, says Ecclesiasticus, (iii, 4.) *shall obtain pardon for his sins by prayer, and shall refrain himself from them and shall be heard in the prayer of days.*

Conclusion.—Surely, my brethren, we have every reason to avail ourselves of the opportunity to purchase so precious a cloak. *If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.* (Canticl. viii, 7.) Like wisdom, charity is *better than merchandise of silver . . more precious than all riches, and all the things that are desired are not be compared with it* (Prov. iii, 14).

Let us strive, therefore, with all eagerness to obtain this beautiful garment which shall adorn those who are faithful, of whom our Lord speaks in St. John's Apocalypse (iii, 5) *they shall walk with me in white because they are worthy. He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; and I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

May the Lord multiply you and make you abound in charity toward each other and toward all men (I Thes. iii, 18). Amen.

PENTECOST SUNDAY.

Less. Act. II, 1-11
Gosp. John XIV, 23-31.

Subject.—*The Peace of Christ.*

Text.—*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.* (Gospel).

Introduction.—Our Lord has indicated the signs which are to forbode the final destruction of this world, when the struggle between good and evil is to cease forever. These signs are to be wars and rumors of war, and dissensions among families, and revolt among nations, and subversion of the elements. In one way or other the world, and especially the Christian Church has had a foretaste of these evils from its very beginning. The Apostles themselves were assured that their lives would be full of suffering and martyrdom, and the same lot fell to their successors during ages of persecution.

But our Lord had assured His faithful followers that He would supply them with a wondrous power and strength to overcome all these evils from which poor human nature shrinks. That power and strength is the gift of peace. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled nor let it be afraid.* They would conquer the world and its hosts of enemies by the word of peace, and the same word of peace they were to bequeath unto every Christian who is to do battle in the cause of God, with the assurance of final victory.

This day, my brethren, is the day on which that mighty sword of peace by which the world is to be subdued, was given to our holy Church for the use of each and all of her children, in the coming down of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Spirit of peace and strength, who is to abide with us to the end of time.

Transition.—When our Lord says *my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, He thereby indicates the twofold condition under which that precious gift is bestowed upon us. The child of God, the follower of Christ, the soldier in the cause of truth, is

I. To *possess* peace;
II. To *impart* peace.

First Point.—In order to possess the peace of Christ we must realize in what it consists. Our Lord Himself tells us

in what it does *not* consist, when He says *not as the world giveth, do I give unto you.* The world has indeed a kind of peace which is like the sleep of the benumbed that precedes death, or at most like the drowsy and short-lived satisfaction which comes from intoxication and which ends in destroying health of mind and heart and body. Such is the false peace which Jeremias condemns in the evil hearted leaders of the Jewish people: *They healed the breach of my people disgracefully, saying, Peace, peace, and there was no peace.* (Jerem. vi, 14.) Of them the Apostle tells us that *destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known* (Rom. iii, 16), for *the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost* (Rom. xiv, 17). Notice how the Apostle joins the possession of peace with justice and joy in the Holy Ghost, for the upright, they who pursue justice, are blessed with this double blessing of happy contentment. *The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice, quietness and security for ever* (Isa. xxxii, 17).

But you will say that it is difficult to obtain this peace at the cost of justice, since there are few men who possess that purity of intention and action which is implied in the word justice. To this we may answer that the practice of justice consists more in a sincere desire of virtue and in the avoidance of those things which are plainly sinful, than in a high and heroic degree of virtue. *Flee thou youthful desires and pursue justice, faith, charity and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart,* says St. Paul (II Tim. ii, 22). It is the avoidance of disorderly habits, the cutting loose from inordinate attachments to earthly things and pleasures which prevent us from gaining peace of heart and from entering the path of justice. The man who loves drink, or money, or sensual pleasures, or who seeks to advance himself at all costs and to satisfy his vanity and pride, may attain the objects of his desires, but with them he loses peace and finds remorse and restlessness. It is a false estimate of happiness which lures him on and makes him in reality very unhappy. *He that will love life and see good days,* writes the Prince of the

Apostles, *let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him turn away from wrong and do good;* and then, as if to show what such aim of conduct leads to in the end, he adds *let him seek after peace and pursue it* (I Pet. iii, 11).

Second Point.—God does not merely give His peace to the good, but He leaves it with them that they might impart it to others. Peace is indeed the precious inheritance of Christ, imparted to every child of the Church since the days of the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God (Mat. v, 9). It was the grand mission which our Lord gave to His disciples and with which every priest begins and ends his holy ministry unto the faithful. When you were carried away from the baptismal font, with the mark of the Christian cross upon your new-born souls, the last words which the priest said to you were "Vade in pace et Dominus sit tecum" that is to say: child, *go in peace and may the Lord be with you.* That same blessing of peace was pronounced again and again in the service of the Catholic liturgy, nay, every time that a priest enters your homes to administer the sacraments to the sick or dying he says silently as he passes your threshold: "Pax huic domui"—*Peace unto this house and to all who dwell therein.* And when the body is dead and is brought once more to the church ere it is laid in the grave, the last blessing which the priest pronounces upon the dead Christian is one of peace. *Lord let him rest in peace.*

Thus, as St. James says, *the fruit of justice is sown in peace to them that make peace* (Jas. iii, 18). There are many opportunities in our lives when we may assume this mission of peace. A kind word to reconcile those who are at variance, often through mere misunderstanding, undoes the rancor of hatred and ill-will. Even with those who are habitually sensitive and easily irritated we can do much by peaceful forbearance. Thus we lessen sin, bring pleasure into homes

which are rendered darksome by strife and dissension and where God cannot dwell with His blessings and graces, for *God is not the God of dissension, but of peace* (I Cor. xiv, 33). *Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see God* (Heb. xii, 14).

Conclusion.—Resolve then, my brethren, on this holy day on which the Spirit of Peace descended upon the Apostles at Jerusalem, that you will seek to preserve it in your own hearts and spread it in the hearts of others. *Let us follow after the things that are of peace and keep the things that are of edification one toward another* (Rom. xiv, 19), in order that the prophetic words of Isaiah may be verified in us as the children of God: *My children shall sit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacles of confidence and in abundant rest* (Isa. xxxii, 18). Amen.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Epist. Rom. XI, 33-36.
Gosp. Matt. XXVIII, 18-20.

Subject.—*Our wonderful Teacher.*

Text.—*Teach ye all nations—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Every body is anxious to know and to learn. We read papers and books, and when there is a lecture or discourse we go to hear it because we want to increase our knowledge in one way or other. But knowledge is of no use unless it be true, for false information deceives and misleads us. In regard to some things it does not matter much in a practical way whether they are true or false and whether we know them rightly or wrongly; but in regard to others it is of great importance. Thus it may not concern a person much whether he knows the road to a dis-

tant country and you will do him perhaps no injury by informing him the wrong way, unless he actually means to go there. But it would, on the other hand, injure a person greatly not to know the road to heaven, or to be misinformed about it because he is sure to die, and if he has not found out why he came into this world, and how he is to employ his life, he will have to regret it all eternity.

If there are very few men who can discover any important truth unless they have had a teacher at least for some time to guide and instruct them, we must suppose that Almighty God, in setting before us as our life work the salvation of our souls, would also give us a teacher. Now there are many who claim to be teachers of religion. Some of these are themselves in error, and our Lord particularly warns us to *beware of false prophets who come in the clothing of sheep.* (Matt. vii, 15.) How then are we to distinguish the true from the false teacher? *By their fruits you shall know them.*

Transition.—The marks of an irreproachable teacher of truth are:

I. That he proclaim everywhere the same truths without contradiction—(Unity);

II. That his conduct be in harmony with his doctrine—(Sanctity);

III. That his precepts and lessons be intelligible and applicable to all for whom they are intended—(Catholicity);

IV. That his information be supported by the testimony of facts and the agreement of other learned men in the past and present—(Apostolicity).

In regard to the divine Revelation there is only one teacher that can claim this uniform, holy, all embracing and unbroken harmony of doctrine, and that teacher is the Catholic Church to whom, in her Apostles and their lawful successors, the office of teaching all mankind the ways of truth and salvation has been committed.

First Point.—The Catholic Church stands prominently before the world as the one great body of religions government which teaches everywhere the same essential truths of faith, carries out everywhere the same form of discipline, observes the same worship throughout the entire world. If a Catholic dies, whether he be a native of this land, or of the old country or of the distant regions of Asia among the Chinese, or from the wild uncultivated tracts of Africa, he will call for the priest and confess his sin and ask for the last sacraments. No matter even if he does not understand the priest, who understands the poor sinner and his needs, the dying man will feel content when he hears the Latin words of the Absolution pronounced over him with a last blessing, and feels the holy oils touch his weak and cold limbs.

So the priest himself, wherever he goes, meets as a brother the priest in foreign lands who speaks the Latin tongue of his holy Mother Church; and everywhere the faithful flock to the altar, no matter how simple and rude, where the priest says Mass; for they care not who the person, when they know that he has the credentials of his sacred ministry in the sacerdotal office.

In this unity the Christian recognizes the true Church of Christ, because her divine Founder had foretold it as one of her characteristic marks and had prayed for it on the eve of His death: *Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are* (John xvii, 11).

And the Apostle of the Gentiles insists upon this on all occasions, and appeals to the newly converted Christians that they *be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, and through all, and in us all.* (Eph. iv, 3.)

There are indeed, and there must needs be, differences in non-essentials, and at times disputes among the faithful about practices of religion. But these things do not indicate a

want of unity in matters of faith: *For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. And having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us* (Rom. xii, 4).

Second Point.—Another mark of our great teacher, the Catholic Church, is that she presents a wonderful consistency in the holiness which her doctrine effects in those who observe faithfully her precepts and teaching. Men sometimes say that Catholics are bad and that a religion which produces such men cannot be true. Yes, my brethren, if the badness of Catholics, wherever we find it and must admit it, were due to the teaching of the Catholic Church, then these persons would be right in refusing to accept the Church as their teacher of truth. But we all know that if a Catholic is bad, it is because he does *not* observe the precepts of the Church and the beautiful doctrines of virtue which she inculcates. Those who are truly faithful to that teaching are models of virtue and holiness. The Church is holy, because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of many thousands of her children. So it had been prophesied of her by David: *Holiness becometh Thy house, O, Lord, unto length of days* (Ps. xcii, 5), and such that house has been built by God, *that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish* (Eph. v, 27).

Third Point.—The teaching of the Catholic Church being intended for all men and not for one class rather than another, is such as to be readily understood and easily practised by all. Our Lord had said: *Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature* (St. Mark xvi, 15). Hence the Catholic truth essential to salvation is not a matter which requires deep learning or assiduous study. It demands but simple intelligence and a docile heart and a will ready to do the works of justice which are the principal test of true

faith. You know, my brethren, that this Gospel of the Catholic Church is constantly being carried by our missionaries to the farthest parts of the earth, wherever there are souls to save, and thus the words spoken to the Apostles are *gone forth*, as St. Paul said they would be to *all the earth and to the end of the world* (Rom. x, 18), to announce the beautiful message of truth and peace to all men without distinction; for *God is not a respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh justice is acceptable to Him* (Acts x, 34).

Fourth Point.—Last of all this grand teacher of truth whose doctrine we follow as faithful Catholics, presents the ancient Apostolic truth taught throughout the ages under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whose perpetual assistance Christ had promised to His Apostles. The Catholic Church holds the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles, and through the unbroken succession of her pastors she derives her orders and her mission from them. Thus it is verified to this day what was said of the first Christians, namely that *they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers* (Acts ii, 42).

Conclusion.—Should we not therefore prize the great grace of being Catholics, since it assures us of so ancient, so reliable, so holy a teacher as the Catholic Church? That she shall never err our Lord Himself has vouched for when he gave to St. Peter, the first great teacher and Sovereign Pontiff of that Church, the assurance that the gates of hell should not prevail against it; that the Holy Spirit would abide in it to the end of time, speaking, not through St. Peter, for he would not live beyond the ordinary life of mortal man, but through his successors to the end of ages. *He that heareth you*, He had said, *heareth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me* (St. Luke x, 16).

Let us be thankful then for the inestimable blessing of

being children of the Catholic Church, and recall to mind this grace in the sign of the holy Cross, as often as we make it upon ourselves with the sincere desire that we may live up to the truth that is taught us in our holy religion and by which we hope to obtain our eternal salvation. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I John III, 13-18.
Gosp. Luke XIV, 16-24,

Subject.—*The Invitation to the Banquet.*

Text.—*A certain man made a great supper and invited many.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Men are as a rule desirous to be invited to the tables of the great, and anxiously take every opportunity to become familiar with those who are distinguished in the walks of life.

Transition.—Our Lord invites us to His holy Table, but finds many slow and remiss, nay, some who despise His gracious invitation and prefer to it the ordinary amusements or occupations of worldly life. This is unreasonable and dangerous.

First Point.—Unreasonable because the invitation is

a. Honorable, for it is a *great* supper;

b. Cordial, for the Master of the house sent his own servants at the regular hour of supper to call the guests whom he had previously invited, that *they should come, for now all things are ready*.

c. Generous, for the Lord of the banquet makes no odious distinctions which might deter some from coming. We are told that he invited *many*, and the fact that the many guests are individually asked to come indicates that they will be most generously treated.

The parable applies to the invitation which each

Christian receives to approach the holy table of Communion. It is most

a. Honorable, inasmuch as it permits us to partake of the food of angels and assures us of the inheritance of the Blessed in heaven, provided we conduct ourselves worthy of so great a privilege as partaking of the precious body and blood of our divine Lord. *Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels and gavest them bread from heaven prepared without labor, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste* (Wisd. xvi, 20). Thus speaks Salomon in prophetic foresight of this royal banquet. The invitation is most

b. Cordial. *Come to me all that labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you* (S. Matt. xi, 28).

c. A boundless generosity characterizes the invitation which our Load extends to His people to approach the holy Table. *I am the Bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst* (John vi, 35). And the Psalmist speaks of the Lord of this banquet thus: *He has made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord; He has given food to them that fear Him*, (cx, 4); and elsewhere he calls it a *table prepared against them that afflict* Him (Ps. xxii, 5); just as another sacred writer speaks of *this gift from God wherewith thou shalt overthrow the adversaries* (I Mac. xv, 16).

Second Point.—But if the refusal of the invitation of our King be unreasonable, in view of the kindly disposition with which so great an honor is offered us, it is also dangerous. For, mark the punishment that awaits those who wantonly set aside the favor of their royal Friend and Master in order to pursue the pleasures and occupations of temporal interest.

None of these men that were invited shall taste of my supper. Weigh the meaning of these words. The banquet to

which the guests were called consisted in the food of heaven, the *bread of life.* Refusing it for the momentary sustenance of earth these men deprived themselves of that which is to maintain their life eternal. They consigned themselves to *death eternal.* Fully in accord with this are the words of our Lord elsewhere: Amen I say to you; he that does not eat of this food and drink of this chalice cannot enter life everlasting.

Conclusion.—(Practical exhortation to frequent Holy Communion.)

NOTES FOR THE PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

THE GREAT RULE.

"The great rule which the masters of rhetoric so much press, can never be enough remembered; that to make a man speak well and pronounce with a right emphasis, he ought thoroughly to understand all that he says, *be fully persuaded of it*, and bring himself to have those affections which he desires to infuse into others. He that is inwardly persuaded of the truth of what he says, and that *has a concern about it* in his mind, will pronounce with a natural vehemence that is far more lovely than all the strains which art can lead him to. An orator must endeavor to feel what he says, and then he will speak so as to make others feel it."

(BURNET.)

"If you would acquire a just pronunciation in reading, you must not only take in the full sense, but enter into the spirit of your author; for you can never convey the force and fullness of his ideas to another till you feel them yourself. No man can *read* an author whom he does not perfectly understand and *taste.*" (MASON.)

This shows that in order properly to read the Gospel one must be imbued with its spirit. The more conformable the life of the preacher is to that of Christ, the more likely will he be a just and eloquent reader of the Gospel.

HOMILETIC MONTHLY

JUNE.

Third Sunday after Pentecost.—The Compassion of our divine Shepherd.
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.—One of the Two Ships.
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.—Our gifts to God.
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.—Seven Baskets full.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I Peter V, 6-11.
Gosp. Luke XV, 1-10.

Subject.—*The Compassion of our divine Shepherd.*

Text.—*What man of you hath a hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them doth he not leave the ninty-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he find it?* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The image of the Good Shepherd who watches His flock with tender care is familiar to us as representing Christ our divine Master in His loving solicitude for the souls of His children. There are among God's flock those who readily hear His voice, who are ever docile and watch the signs of His approbation that they might thus fulfill His holy will. There are others wilful and perverse, who love the dangers that withdraw them from the restraints of their heavenly Shepherd's care, and these alas perish, for they will not yield to the inviting and warning voice of One who loves them, and thus they are ruined through their own evil will.

There is a third class, neither so faithful and loving as never to stray out of sight of their gentle Master, nor so bent

on wrong as to flee from Him who would save them from the allurements of a treacherous and cruel wolf. They are those who fall through weakness, whose imprudence makes them court temptation until their eyes have been opened to the sad fact that they are rushing toward eternal ruin. There are many of this class, my brethren, amongst us, willing to save their souls, sorry for past sin, yet often doubting whether God could take us back to His chaste friendship after so much wrong doing which must have wounded His loving Sacred Heart to the very quick.

Transition.—To such of us as are anxious to be better, to be nearer and truer to God than we have hitherto been, the brief reflection upon

I. The characteristics of our Good Shepherd ; and
II. The qualities which He expects to find in us as members of His flock

will serve as a help to animate our courage and confidence.

First Point.—The love of our divine Shepherd for His flock is

a. Compassionate. This is to say, that He loves the unfortunate sinners, not only with the love for His creatures however perfect, but that His Sacred Heart is touched with special sympathy for sinners because of their dangerous condition. Have you ever observed the love of a mother for her sick or unfortunate child. Her affections extend indeed to all, and she is proud of the talents of her boy or the beauty of her daughter ; and yet the little deformed cripple, or the poor boy that has been lured into evil ways by his very good-heartedness, or the sick and querulous little one that keeps her wakeful all the night by its frettings—these are the ones whom she presses to her bosom with a deeper and more intense affection than the rest. And why ? Because she feels that these are less capable of helping themselves. It is the love of compassion. Just so it is with the divine Heart, aye and much

stronger. *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee.* Thus speaks the prophet Isaiah in the name of God (xlix, 15). And elsewhere he says in the same sense: *Even to your old age I am the same, and to your gray hairs I will carry you; I have created you and I will bear, I will carry and I will save* (Is. xlvi, 4). *Behold I have graven thee in my hands.*

b. Our King Shepherd is not simply compassionate as one who regrets the loss of his sheep yet does not take any steps to recover it, but He is also *active* so as to facilitate our return to the safe enclosure and salutary pasture. *I will feed my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down says the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away I will bring back again; and I will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve and I will feed them* (Ezech. xxxiv, 15).

Thus our Lord is forever active to bring back the straying sinner. He calls him with a thousand notes of warning; He pursues him into the dens of sin and malice and stirs his benumbed conscience by remorse and sometimes by suffering and sorrow. When our divine Lord was on earth in human form. we find Him at times weary and footsore with wandering in search of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The same solicitude animates His Sacred Heart to pursue the sheep lost in the brambles and thorns of despair and a ready prey to the searching ravenous wolf. *I will deliver them out of the hand of death*, says Osee (xiii, 14), *I will redeem them from death—I will draw them with the bands of love.*

But God Himself cannot bring us out of a self-chosen danger if we are not willing to turn from it and accept the offered hand that will save us. There

are men who have become so enslaved to sin that they will not give it up, although they see the awful penalty into which they are rushing. In order to be saved

Second Point.—We must be willing to return to God, which means that

a. We listen to His voice and make some effort to meet Him. Blessed he that recognizes the Master's call, and remembering the kindness of His Christian home arises with the prodigal son to return in humble confession of his guilt to his Heavenly Father. Or, do we find even this effort impossible; are we so deeply sunk in the mire of sin, so fastened by the briars where we sought luscious berries, but found ourselves soon entangled in thorns, so that death threatens from want of spiritual food—then let us raise the voice of our heart, cry out: Lord help me Thou, for I perish and am unable to make even a weak effort to extricate myself from the habits of sin in which I live at present!

b. The Lord will hear your cry, and He will loosen your thorny bonds though His own hands be bleeding with the effort; for see *God so loved the world as to give His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.* (John iii, 16). And *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?* (Rom. viii, 32).

Conclusion.—Such is the love of our Good Shepherd, who searches for His lost sheep, frees it from the toils that hold it bound and endanger its life, and then places it upon His shoulder to carry it back gently and patiently to the flock. Shall not this fact animate us to prove ourselves grateful to Him henceforth, to turn no longer a deaf ear when He warns against sin, but to thank Him for the

opportunities He holds out to us to come back, nay to be carried back, if only we are not blind to His endearments and obstinate in our wrongs. *In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment* (I John iv, 17). *Give praise, therefore, O ye heavens and rejoice, O earth, because the Lord has comforted His people and will have mercy on His poor ones* (Isa. xlix, 13). *As one whom the mother caresseth so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted* (*Ibid.* lxvi, 13). Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Rom. VIII, 18-23.
Gosp. Luke V, 1-11.

Subject.—*One of the two Ships.*

Text.—*And He saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—St. Peter and his men are engaged washing their nets when our divine Lord comes to the shore of the lake, followed by an immense throng of people who desire to hear Him preach. There are two ships standing by the lake. Our Lord chooses one, bids Peter go into it and draw back from the land, and from this ship of St. Peter He teaches the multitude. The incident is full of suggestiveness of a truth which lies at the basis of our Catholic faith and firm confidence in the teachings of Christ's religion as delivered to us from St. Peter's bark, the Apostolic Church, over which the successor of the first fisherman commissioned by our Lord to cast out his net, still presides to this day and will, as we know, to the end of time; for He who taught the multitude from this vessel of Simon Peter, and bade him afterwards cast forth his nets, as if to foreshadow his later

Apostolic mission as a catcher of men, that same divine Teacher also prophesied that the gates of hell should never prevail against that Church which He would found upon the rock represented by St. Peter.

Transition.—But the Evangelist mentions *two* ships, as if to contrast the vessel chosen by Christ, which He bade St. Peter to row out into the deep, with that empty vessel of the world and of irreligion, which is tossed about by the wind and waves, having no commander or safe guide, and purposeless until filled with the treasures gathered in the nets of St. Peter.

The points in to-day's Gospel, which have a certain prophetic bearing as indicating the mission of the Catholic Church, are:

I. Christ chooses one vessel and that one belonging to Simon, "*and going up into one of the vessels that was Simon's, He desired him to draw back a little from the land*"

II. The Evangelist emphasizes the fact that Christ taught the multitude out of this ship of Simon Peter and *when He had ceased to speak, he said to Simon, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.*

Nothing could more clearly indicate the Apostolic commission given to St. Peter and preserved in the one true Church of which the legitimate successor of St. Peter is this day the guardian and head.

First Point.—Christ established *only one true Church* as the centre of Catholic doctrine and discipline. You know, my brethren, that God cannot contradict Himself, because He is the Eternal Truth that knoweth no change. Nor could He leave us in doubt about His teachings for there would be no use in teaching a truth if He did not also give us an infallible means of rightly understanding and interpreting it. Now outside of the Church there are many differences of

belief, and each one interprets the meaning of the written Scriptures in his own way; and although these ways are often opposed one to the other, yet all appeal to the same Bible. God could never have intended such a diversity in matters that are essential to our eternal salvation. Outside of the Catholic Church one man believes in baptism and another denies it, one believes in the Blessed Eucharist, another denies it; and all these believe that their doctrine is taught them in the holy Scriptures.

In the Catholic Church it is very different. Whilst the members disagree in many things which are not essential—they are all united in the doctrines which are of faith; for, as the Catechism defines the unity of the Church, she is "one because all her members agree in one Faith, have all the same Sacrifice and sacraments, and are all united under one Head." It was this which our Lord taught and for which He prayed at the Last Supper: *Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are* (John xvii 11).

Second Point.—And as our Lord taught out of Simon Peter's vessel, so He gave St. Peter the command of it for future generations in order that he might let down his net to catch men: *And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.* And when St. Peter died the martyr's death and could no longer fulfil this commission of catching men, were these commands and graces to cease? Were the countless millions of souls to come never to be caught in the glorious net of St. Peter? O no, for Christ had told the Prince of the Apostles and his brethren *to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.* That meant that St. Peter should bequeath the commission given him by Christ to others after him and thus to hand down the precious heirloom from generation to generation, in order that all might be sustained by the Apostolic power. And as St. Peter was the head of the Apostles so there was to be a visible head of the Bishops and priests in after ages. This head was to confirm the rest of the faithful just as St.

Peter had been told to confirm the rest of the Apostolic College and be preserved by a special grace from becoming the prey of Satan : *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not : and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren* (Luke xxii, 31).

Conclusion.—It is because of this and the assurance of Christ who said to St. Peter "*I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*" (Matt. xvi, 15.), that we pledge our fidelity to the Vicar of Christ on earth, and listen to his teaching with the same reverence with which the faithful accepted the heavenly doctrine from the Apostle St. Peter and his divine Master Himself. We are safe in the bark of the humble Galilean fisherman and we lose not confidence despite the dark hours and troublesome sea, remembering the success of the Prince of the Apostles who had labored in vain all night, but at the word of Christ threw out his net and was rewarded for his obedience and confidence so as to be able to give of the abundant blessings of his rich draught, even unto the poor, hopeless world, symbolized by the empty vessel which had no one to guide it. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I Pet. III, 8-15.
Gosp. Matt. V, 20-24.

Subject.—*Our Gifts to God.*

Text.—*For unto this you are called that you may inherit a blessing.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—Our Lord in this day's Gospel contrasts the false views of worldly justice and charity with those

solid principles of self-denial which underlie, as motives, all truly good actions according to the maxims of the Christian religion.

The generosity of our Catholic people in support of religious institutions is proverbial. If any one were to doubt it let him look around upon the splendid churches, the parish schools, the academies of learning and superior education, and the numerous asylums for the sick, the aged, the poor and orphaned, everywhere ministered to by the self-sacrificing zeal of our religious, and supported by the kindly munificence of our Catholic people, most of whom have to labor for their small gains in the sweat of their brows.

Transition.—But whilst there can be no doubt about the big-hearted charity which produces such noble results in every part of the land, it is also true that it is not always pure virtue and disinterestedness which causes men, even Catholics, to give in behalf of a good cause which promotes the glory of God and the well-being of their fellow-men. When we remember the folly of the man who, whilst he bestows a gift, spurns the beggar to whom he gives it, and thus loses his title to gratitude, we might bethink ourselves as to the manner in which we bring our gifts of charity to the altar, lest we lose the reward which is promised for even a glass of water when given with a right motive of pleasing God.

Accordingly let us reflect on

I. The way in which charity is rendered unprofitable to the giver.

II. The way in which charity becomes a hundredfold blessing to the giver.

First Point.—A man may be induced to give to a good object.

a. Through human respect, that is with reluctance and because he fears the criticism of others. From such motives persons, sometimes, give where they cannot

afford it legitimately. They seek to be generous whilst they fail to be just. God does not want the gift of a person who neglects to pay his legitimate debts in order that he might be able to satisfy the claims of those who ask in the name of charity. *According to thy ability*, says Tobias, *be merciful. If thou have much, give abundantly, if thou have little, take care even so to bestow a little* (Tob. iv, 8).

b. We may also give through a vain desire of ostentation and a wish to have our names heralded before others as benefactors. Now this is not only against the teaching of our Lord, but against all true wisdom, because it robs us of the merit and fruit of a good deed. *When thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the street, that they may be honored by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth, that thy alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee* (Matt. vi, 2-4).

c. Again we may give, but give *with reluctance* and complainingly and thus spoil the good effect of our deed. *Let every one give*, says the Apostle, *as he hath determined in his heart; but not with sadness or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver* (II Cor. ix, 7). And similarly we read in the Old Testament: *My son*, says the Wise Man, *in thy good deeds make no complaint; and when thou givest anything add not grief by an evil word . . . the good word is better than the gift* (Eccli. xviii, 15). And again: *Afflict not the heart of the needy, and defer not to give to him that is in distress* (Eccli. iv, 3). *Say not to thy friend: Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give thee when thou canst give at present* (Prov. iii, 28).

Second Point.—It is plain from the consideration of these defects how we are to make our charity profitable alike

to our souls and to our neighbor or the good work to which we lend our support. Let it be done from the love of God, that is to say, from supernatural motives. Above all let it be done with a heart free from bitterness. *Bow down thy ear cheerfully to the poor*, says Ecclesiasticus, *and pay what thou owest, and answer peaceable words with mildness* (Eccli. iv, 8). *As your mind is ready to be willing, so it may be also ready to do out of that which you possess; for if the will be there it is accepted according to that which a man hath, not according to that which he has not* (II Cor. viii, 11).

The intelligent and truly charitable disposition is not reckless in giving, but bestows its kindness where it is truly needed. *Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor*, says the royal Psalmist. And the same is true of the sacrifices which we make in support of any truly good work. *Honor the Lord with thy substance, and give Him first of all thy fruits* (Prov. iii, 9). This the Apostle recommends to the young Church of Corinth; *As in all things you abound in faith and the Word and Knowledge and all carefulness; moreover also in your charity towards us, so in this grace may you also abound. I speak not as commanding, but by the carefulness of others, approving the good disposition of your charity* (II Cor. viii, 7). Thus virtue and kindly disposition of heart must go hand in hand; for the heart that is full of rancor and bitter feeling is not fit to present its gift to the Lord.

Conclusion.—Upon such charity rests God's special blessing even in this life; and the praise and good will which the vain man fruitlessly seeks becomes the portion of the truly generous heart. *The lips of many shall bless him that is liberal of his substance, and the testimony of his truth is faithful* (Eccli. xxxi, 28). For such a one David prayed when he said: *The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies. The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow* (Ps. xl, 1). *By mercy and truth iniquity is redeemed* (Prov. xiii, 8), *and in justice thou shalt build up, and*

in the day of affliction thou shalt be rememberd, and thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather (Eccli. iii, 15). Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Subject.—*The Seven baskets of fragments.*

Text.—*And they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Our Lord feeds the multitude that has followed Him to hear His doctrine. We may be assured that as the heavenly teaching of Christ fell upon the souls of those who hungered and thirsted after justice, they were filled with abundance of grace. They had carried out the injunction *seek ye first the kingdom of heaven*, and now God proved to their generous confidence, that *all else would be added unto them.* The loaves and fishes satisfied their need for food in abundance, so that seven baskets of the miraculous bread remained.

Transition.—And just as the material food was supplied them, leaving a remnant for others who might still come, or those who were tarrying on the way too weary to go as far as the place where the Master had preached, so may we believe that of the spiritual food which He supplied them in His preaching there remained some fragments which could nourish other souls who were not so fortunate as to receive the heavenly food from the Saviour's lips on this occasion. The teaching of Christ answers every need of the hungry soul, nor has it been denied to us, who are constantly fed by the miraculous loaves of the Bread of Angels which is not only the Holy Communion, but every word that falleth from the mouth of our heavenly Father. Of the fragments which abound, we too may dispense to our brethren around us after being filled with its nourishing substance. There are seven baskets.

First Point.—One for the *poor: Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy, and with thy garments cover the naked* (Tob. iv, 17.)

Second Point.—One for the *sorrowful.* There are always within our reach those who suffer bereavement and whom our active sympathy can console. *Be not wanting in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn* (Eccli. vii, 38).

Third Point.—One for the *ignorant.* St. Paul said of his brethren that *they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge* (Rom. x, 3). Opportunities of instructing persons in the right teaching of the Catholic Church offer themselves to most of us, if we have but the courage to use them. It is not necessary to possess great learning in order to convince men of good will of the truth of our holy religion. Every one can do some thing to point the way to right information, and thus to disarm at least prejudice, even if we cannot induce persons to think seriously of seeking the Church established by God for our salvation.

Fourth Point.—One for the *sinner.* If we are filled with the grace of God by having eaten of the heavenly food of Christ's table and doctrine as we should, then we will also have it in our power to lead our straying brother away from the path of sin and ruin. He that converteth a soul from its evil doings has purchased his own soul unto predestination. Recall to the mind of your erring brother the word of the Lord to the Jewish people: *If you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though you should be led away to the uttermost parts of the world, I will gather you from thence and bring you back to the place which I have chosen for my name to dwell there.*

Fifth Point.—One for the *sick.* Do the work of thy Master who *went about all the cities and towns, healing every disease and every infirmity* (Matt. ix, 35). Although it may not be in our power to perform the miracle of a physical cure,

yet we can do much to alleviate pain; we may become the instruments of salvation to those who are too weak or too listless to attend to the one thing necessary, such as receiving the sacraments, or preparing rightly for death. *Be not slow to visit the sick; for by these things thou shalt be confirmed in love* (Eccli. vii, 39).

Sixth Point.—One for thy *enemy.* The precept of divine charity enjoins that we love our enemies; that we do good to them who persecute and calumniate us. The Lord will measure out retribution in time, for He is the Judge of all.

Seventh Point.—One for thy *troublesome friend.* St. Paul tells the Hebrews: *Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise* (Heb. x, 36). You remember how Abraham dealt with his brother Lot when the herdsmen of both quarrelled over their right of pasture: *Let there be no quarrel I beseech thee* he said, *between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren* (Gen. xiii, 8). And he allowed Lot to have his choice of the land although he was the younger brother. *Do good and lead,* says St. Luke, *hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Highest; for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is also merciful* (Luke vi, 35). Yes, my brethren, of all the virtues which we have it most frequently in our power to practice patience it is which bears the richest fruits both for time and eternity. *Humble thy heart and endure; incline thy ear and receive the words of understanding; and make not haste in the time of clouds.—Wait on God with patience; join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end.—Take all that shall be brought upon thee, and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience.—For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation* (Eccli. ii, 2-5).

Conclusion.—These are the seven baskets of fragments which we may distribute to our weary brethren when the

Bread of Eternal Life has filled us with strength and compassion in the Lord. And are we not the favored children of God's household to whom the heavenly banquet of the miraculous Bread is forever open and offered? What shall we say to our King and Judge at the hour of death, when He asks an account of the use we have made of our privilege as Catholics in aiding our brother who is perhaps less favored? *God has regenerated us to an inheritance incorruptible, wherein you shall greatly rejoice if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations: that the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold, which is tried by the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honor, at the appearing of Jesus Christ* (I Pet. 1). Amen.

NOTES FOR PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

INFLECTION.

Inflection is to be left to the elocutionary instinct, to the ear for inflection. It is not to be learned from such a rule as this, for example, which I find in one of the books of elocution.

Rule I.—Whenever the sense of a sentence is yet incomplete or suspended, then the rising inflection is to be used, as in the following: "I am súre, were the noble lórds as wéll acquaínted as *I* am wĭth but hálf the dífficulty and delays occasioned in the córurts of jústice under the preténce of prívilege, they woúld not—nay, cóuld not, oppóse this bill."

I am *sure*, were the noble lord as well acquainted as I am with but half the difficulty and delay occasioned by trying to speak his speech according to such a rule as this, he would thank me for delivering him from it, and inducing him to try his own ear upon his own inflections.

Another of the rules of the elocutionist is: "Pause before and after the emphatic word, and put a circumflex on it."

Where do you get this rule?

From conversation.

Finding that we do this naturally, let us do it mechanically. We do it by instinct in private talking, let us do it by rule in public speaking. Finding that while eating, every time your elbow bends, your mouth flies open, therefore this rule: When your elbow bends, open your mouth! Nonsense! Leave the pauses, emphases and circumflex where you found them, and cultivate the ear for pauses, emphases and circumflex. If you deprive the speaker of his pauses and inflections, what is there left for his brains?

(SHEPPARD, *Before an Audience.*)

"The day of Christ's resurrection means *life* for the dead, *pardon* for the sinner, and *glory* for the saints." (St. Augustine, serm. 63 de Temp.)

"The excellence of our faith does not merely consist in this that we believe in Christ's death, but rather that we have assurance of His resurrection. For even the infidel believes in the death of Christ and makes it a subject of reproach against us that we believe Him to be the Son of God who died upon the Cross. Wherein then lies the greatness of our trust? In the fact that Christ arose from the dead and that we too shall one day rise like Him. This is the glory of our faith." (St. Ambros. in Ps. 101.)

"How senseless," said the pagan Prefect who condemned St. Margaret, the Virgin Martyr, to death, "to adore as God a man who died upon an infamous gibbet!" "And how dost thou know that my Lord was crucified?" asked the Saint. "From your Gospel," replied the tyrant. "Well said and true," answered St. Margaret, "but the same books that tell of my Master's death, tell of His glorious resurrection. Why then wilt thou believe the one and not the other! We Christians believe in His divinity, not because He died, but because He arose from the dead and thus proved Himself the Lord and Conqueror of death. This is the testimony of our Allelujah." (Act. Mart. Veit.)

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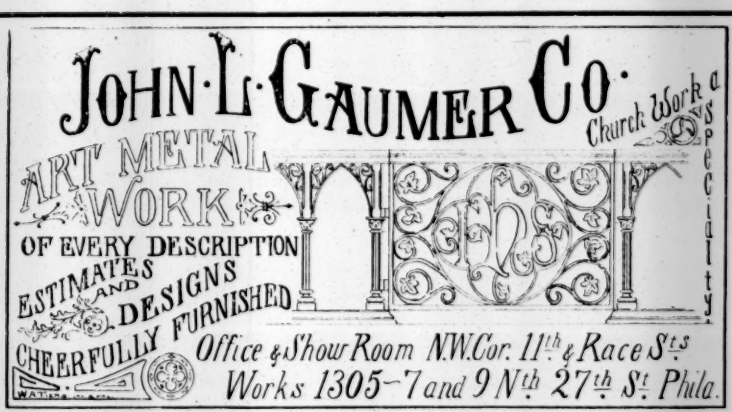
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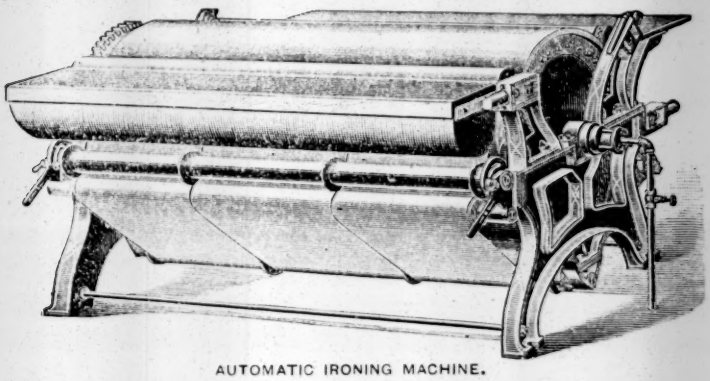

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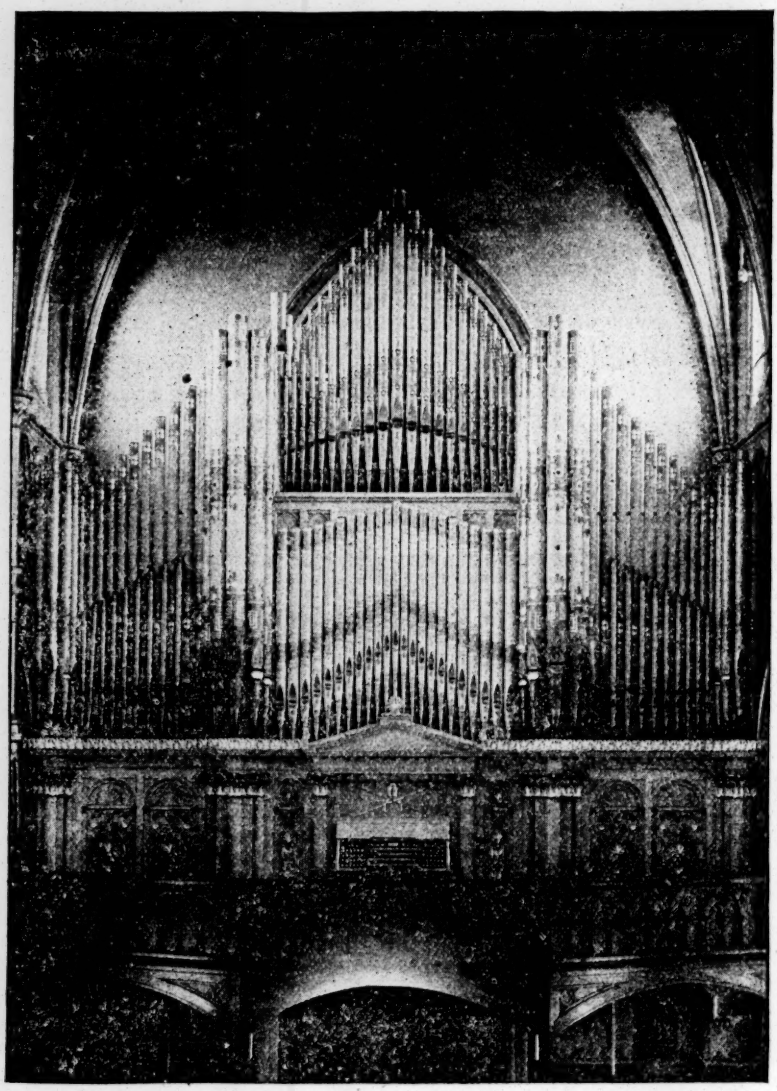

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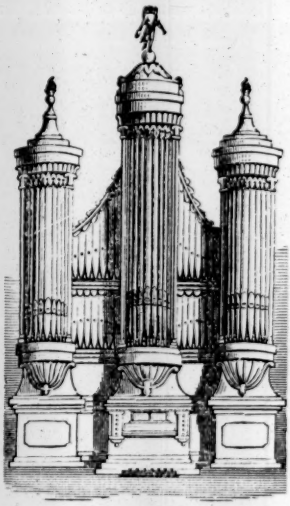

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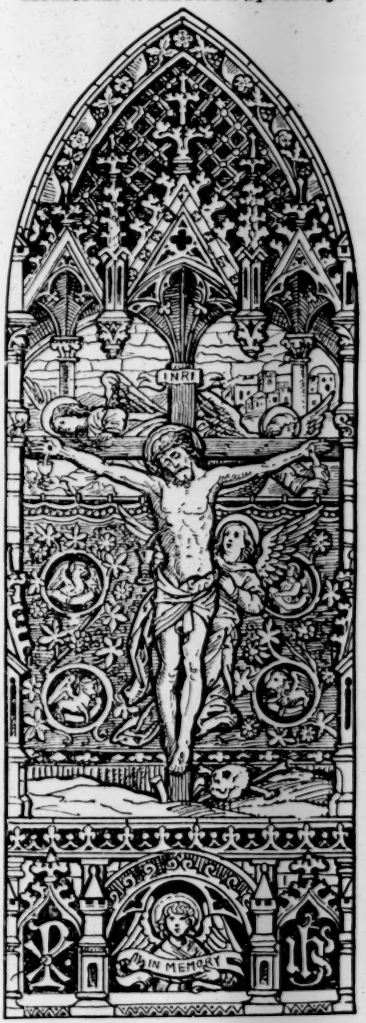

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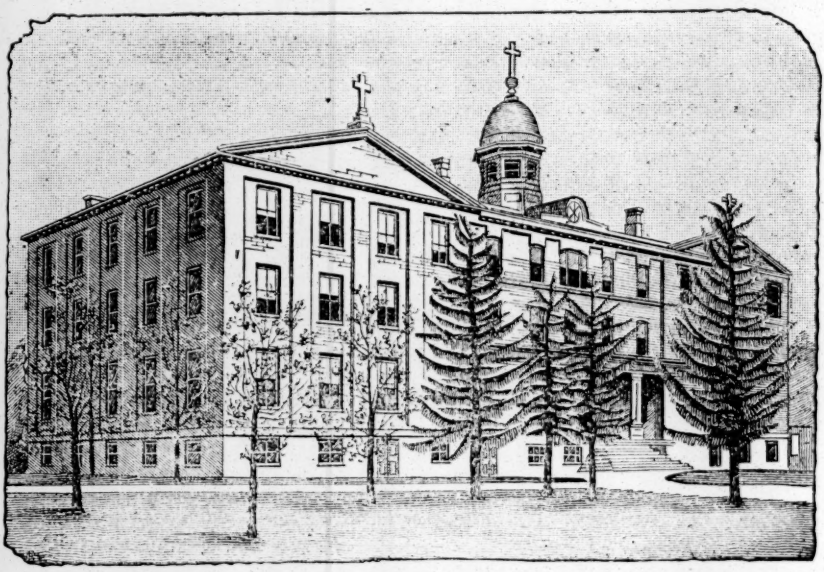

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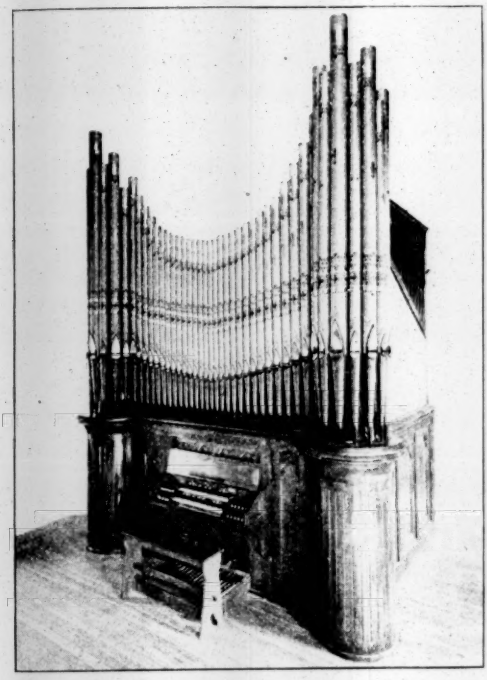

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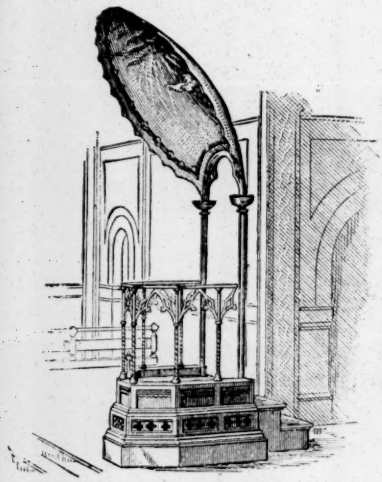

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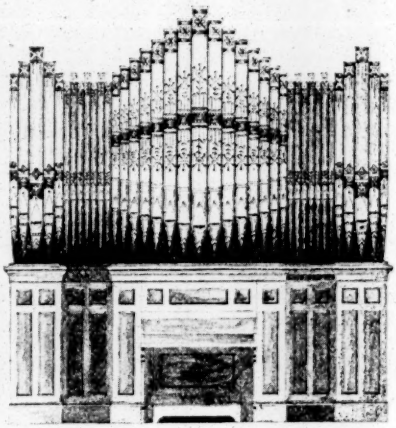

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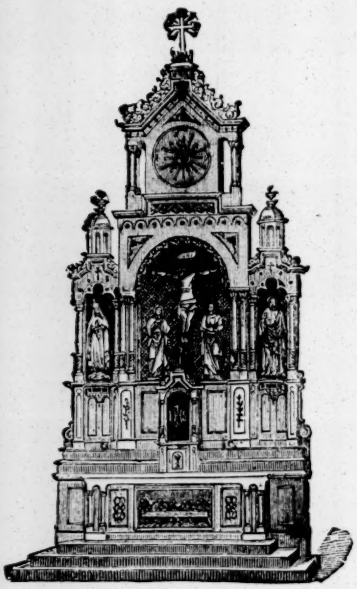

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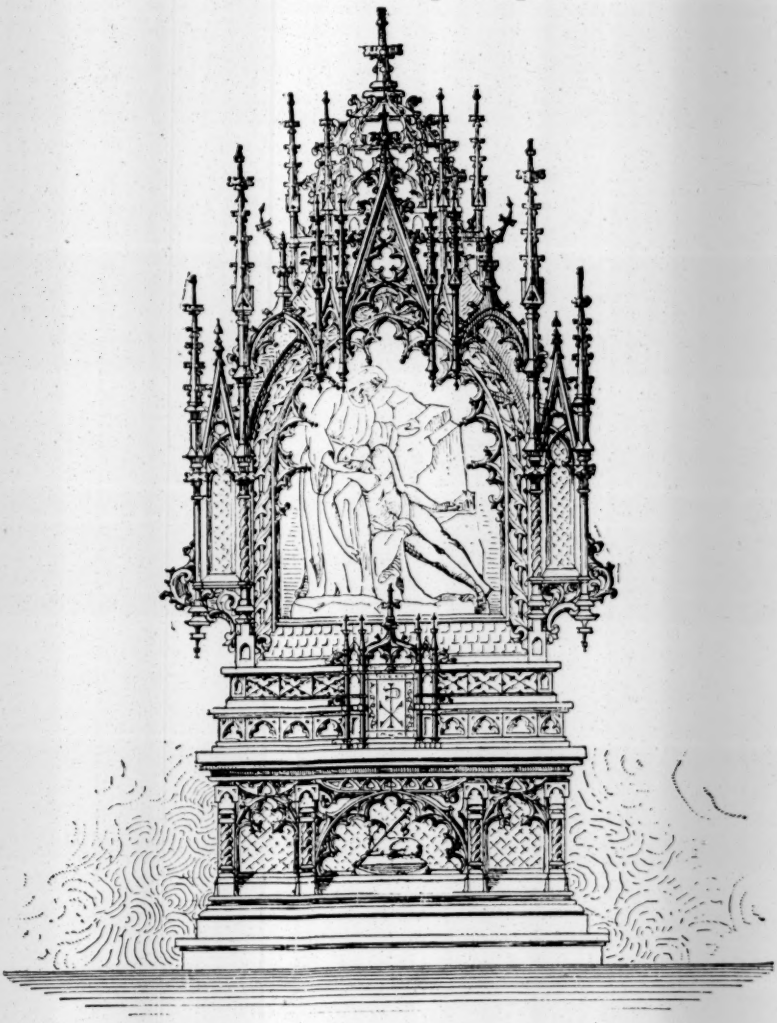

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